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DAVID HUMPHREYS, LL.D.

D. Humphreys

Life and Times

of

David Humphreys

Soldier—Statesman—Poet

"Belov'd of Washington"

By

Frank Landon Humphreys

In Two Volumes

Volume One

Illustrated

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
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by
FRANK LANDON HUMPHREYS

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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

This sacred stone let future patriots read,
May bid the living emulate the dead:
Him, who in youth was arm'd for civil right,
And shar'd the dangers brav'd in freedom's fight.
These sylvan plains, where first to life he sprung,
His sword defended, and his numbers sung.
In graver years the statesman's toil he prov'd,
And serv'd, in foreign realms, the land he lov'd.
Ere age advanc'd, back to that land he bore
The fleecy treasures of Iberia's shore.
Patron of arts, and guardian of the state;
Friend to the poor, and honour'd by the great;
To sum all titles to respect, in one —
Here Humphreys rests — blest friend of Washington.

Epitaph Written by Colonel Trumbull.

PREFACE

IT is singular how historians and other writers have ignored the share which David Humphreys had in the career of Washington. The fair-minded reader of those stirring times would have thought that the mere fact that Humphreys was the friend and trusted confidant of Washington would have been sufficient to induce writers to dwell lovingly on his character and his deeds. Authors, and especially those who give attention to historical matters, are too fond of following in the steps of those who have preceded them. Independent research and independent thinking are laborious, and are more exceptional than they ought to be. These are, we conceive, the grounds for the silence which has been maintained in regard to the companion and friend of Washington—one whom Washington delighted to honour and for whom no office in the Commonwealth was, as we shall see, considered too high.

The biographies of many men of the Revolutionary period who ranked but insignificantly in their day have been produced and some of these present an amplitude of detail that is as wonderful as it is amusing.

It may safely be said that as it is impossible to write the Life of Humphreys without including a large part of the life of Washington, so it is almost as impossible to write fully of the career of Washington without present-

ing, in large measure at least, the life of Humphreys. It is with the hope of putting Humphreys into his proper place in American history that this book has been written.

Not only have new facts been brought forward, but new light has been thrown upon what has long been known in part.

Much of the original correspondence between Washington and Humphreys, and between Humphreys and his distinguished contemporaries, has been preserved in the State Archives and the Congressional Library at Washington, and is now first published or is for the first time reprinted accurately.

The life of one who was styled by his contemporaries the "Belov'd of Washington," and whom Washington repeatedly hoped to secure not only as his friend and companion in his declining years at Mount Vernon, but also as his biographer, is now presented to a later generation of Americans who have realized that the honour and glory of their country are to be found in an adherence to the principles laid down by Washington.

David Humphreys was, perhaps, the most versatile of the men who composed what was known as "Washington's Family." Soldier, Statesman, Poet, and Manufacturer, he won for himself an unique position among the many able men of the Revolutionary period.

Soldier.—While not given command of any division of the Continental Army, he was time and time again selected by the Commander-in-Chief to head expeditions where coolness, courage, and audacity were the essential requisites. From the Battle of Long Island to the surrender at Yorktown, we find him always to the fore as the trusted officer and Aide. And later on in the Shays Rebellion and the tumults of the East, he won distinction. To him must be given the credit of being the first military man, not only to see the wisdom of enlisting the aid and sympathy

of coloured men, but actually to form a company of negro troops.

Statesman.—The high opinion entertained by Washington of Humphreys' statesmanlike qualities was shown by the fact that the only favour that the Father of our Country ever asked of Congress was the appointment of David Humphreys as Secretary for Foreign Affairs. This request Congress denied, but that the appointment would have been a wise one is proved by the singular wisdom and skill which Humphreys showed when appointed our first Minister; first in Lisbon, and afterwards in Madrid. At both Courts his position was difficult in the extreme, yet by his courtliness of manner, his quiet but insistent demands that the rights of the United States be respected, he won first the respect and then the admiration of the two Courts in the Peninsula. His despatches are not mere official reports. They all show the breadth of a statesman who plans for the future. Thus, while battling for the release of American citizens from the slavery in which they were being held by the Barbary pirates, he repeatedly points out, and was the first to do so, the absolute necessity of a Naval Militia to protect the commerce of the United States, and also the needs of a merchant marine that should carry the growing commerce of the new nation into all seas.

To him is due the credit of freeing all commerce of the intolerable yoke of the Algerine pirates to whom hitherto even Great Britain and France had truckled and paid ransom. He even went so far as to demand redress from Spain for the wrongs done to American shipping by French privateers who made Spanish ports a base for their operations.

Polite and courtly, suave and man of the world as Humphreys was, he was bedrock when the honour and dignity of America was at stake.

Poet.—There is a fashion in Poetry as in all else. Poets of the Elizabethan day wrote differently from those in the times of Chaucer, and the Addisonian Poets wrote again differently from the contemporaries of Shakespeare. Humphreys followed the fashion of his day. His versification is smooth and he inclines to prolixity—yet in everything he wrote as in everything he did, Humphreys shows that to him America and Americanism was a passion.

That his contemporaries valued his Poetry is proved by the many editions his poems went through.

Manufacturer.—If not the first to import Merino Sheep into America, David Humphreys was the founder of the Woollen Industry in this Country. His Mills at Humphreysville produced work that became famous for the excellence of its quality, and his factories were cited as models for the harmonious relations that existed between owner and employed, and for the regulations under which work was carried on. Humphreys took a personal interest in his mills and his work people.

Soldier, Statesman, Poet, Manufacturer—David Humphreys was a forerunner of that class of Americans who have won the admiration of the world for their restless energy and versatility.

It must be noted that very little of the Humphreys correspondence is published in these volumes. Let us hope that at some future time all the Humphreys correspondence will be carefully edited and annotated. His correspondence with the first three Presidents of the United States, the different Secretaries of State, and most of the eminent men of that period is a mine of information for every student of our country's life while its history was in the making.

It is well to observe that Humphreys did not spell his name uniformly, in fact it was not until about 1794 that he finally permanently adopted the signature of

"Humphreys." To avoid confusion, however, it has been decided to print his name as "Humphreys" throughout the correspondence.

When this work was being compiled, the Humphreys and Washington correspondence was all housed in the State Department, and the references were accordingly made to the Archives of the State Department. It has not been found expedient to alter the references, although most of the correspondence has been transferred to the Manuscript Department of the Library of Congress, where it is now being lovingly cared for by the present Librarian of that Department.

F. L. H.

January, 1917.

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Life and Times of David Humphreys

The Life of David Humphreys

CHAPTER I

Ancestry

The Birth of David Humphreys—The Old Humphrey House—The Rev. Daniel Humphrey and Lady Humphrey—Their Ancestry—The Humphreys in England—In America—Michael Humphrey—Religious Convictions—Sergeant John Humphrey—Deacon John Humphrey—A Seat in the Meeting House and its Significance—Daniel Humphrey—His Appointment as Pastor—His Character and Influence—Lady Humphrey—Her Ancestry—Her Character and Disposition.

DAVID HUMPHREYS, the "beloved of Washington," was born in Derby, Connecticut, July 10, 1752. If tradition is to be believed, and tradition still lingers round the name of Lady Humphrey,[1] that tenth of July was an exceptionally hot and sultry day, and the flowers and flower beds which Lady Humphrey loved to tend were drooping, parched and wilted, beneath the windows of her stately house when her fourth son was born to her.

The room in which David was born, so runs tradition, is

[1] Both forms of the name—Humphrey and Humphreys—appear in the records of the family. During and after the Revolution the Colonel usually followed the latter form.

the large front one, on the first floor on the east side of the house. Built prior to 1730, this dwelling still stands pathetic amid its neglected grounds, yet bearing marks of its ancient stateliness. It is built in the prevailing style of the first third of the eighteenth century, and while not much removed from the road, yet stands on a high bank, which thus gives it an appearance of height and dignity that it would not otherwise have.

Only two great elms now remain of the row which fringed the boundary of the property along the road. No trace of the gardens is left save some irises, narcissi and other flowers of the bulb variety—which defy man's ingratitude and come up year after year in the bed on the east side of the house and beneath the parlour windows.

Scarcely any marks of the ancient elegance of the old house now remain. On the window panes, here and there, are a few of the ancient lead ornamentations which descended like garlands from the top panes. On these leaden ornaments, traces of gilding can still be faintly seen, proving, however, that the house in its day must have been designed with more than the usual elegance of finish customary at that period. The old brass knocker was wrenched off the door by some vandal, as recently as the spring of 1902.

The frame is of massive oak, and its roof is supported by timbers still sound. It is two stories high with the garret overhanging the second story. Up through the centre runs the great square stone chimney. Within, the rooms are spacious, the parlour being seventeen feet square. The front hall is devoid of any special decoration, the staircase being boxed in with a small closet beneath. The mantels are handsomely carved and even now the house shows that it was one of those belonging to people of distinction and refinement.

The Birthplace of David Humphreys

It was to this house that the Rev. Daniel Humphrey brought his bride in 1737, who soon became known, partly as a compliment to her grace and refinement, but perhaps, more on account of her dignity and aristocratic demeanour, which as we shall see her son David inherited from her, as "Lady" Humphrey. Here through his long ministry, lived the pastor of the church which was then located a short distance from his dwelling, on the brow of Clark's Hill. Here his children were born, here he pondered his solemn discourses, here he received, with Lady Humphrey, his parishioners on great occasions, such as Fast Day, Thanksgiving or Election Day. Opposite was the modest building of Christ Church, in which faithfully for seventy-two years, Richard Mansfield broke for his flock the Bread of Life. The old cemetery still remains, but the busy life of Derby, Ansonia and Seymour no longer centres around these relics of the past. According to present boundaries the house is in South Ansonia on the street known as Elm Street.

The view on the opposite page is reproduced from a photograph taken in the summer of 1902.

In the large east room upstairs is an old mahogany wardrobe, which must have been set up in the room itself, as it is too large to take out of the room or to have been moved into it. This and an old broken spindle in the attic are the only ancient pieces of furniture in the house. Possibly they date back to Lady Humphrey's time.

The curious and patient investigation of the origin of the family of Humphreys finds persons of the name living in Norway or other portions of the Scandinavian peninsula in remote antiquity. In those days when other lands of Europe were in the grasp of the feudal system and no one from peasant to baron could call himself really free, these fierce and courageous men rejoiced in their name of "Home frei," that is "free home" which in Anglo-Saxon

became "Home freid" or in its latinized form, "Umfridus." It has been not only conjectured but practically proven that there were families of the name in Great Britain as early as the sixth century; Umfridus, Bishop, witnessed about 604 a gift from "Ethelbert King of Kent" to St. Paul's Church now St. Paul's Cathedral, London, of the manor of Tillingham. The further research of members of the family interested in its origin has discovered that those who crossed the Channel were probably the more enterprising and ambitious.

The name of Umfrey or Humphrey is found as early as the eighth century in Normandy and Brittany. It was borne by dignified Bishops, mitred Abbots, brave knights and wealthy landowners.

Several of the name accompanied William, Duke of Normandy, when in 1066 he claimed from King Harold the fulfilment of his promise and conquered England. Sir Robert de Umfreville, who is called his "kinsman," Humphrey de Carteret, Humphrey, Lord of Bohun, whose descendants were Hereditary Constables of England, afterward Earls of Hereford, Essex, and Northampton, are among those known to have been honoured by him and granted estates in England. Many of their descendants went to the Holy Land during the Crusades, and especially distinguished were Peter d'Amfreville, 1197, "le Sir d' Umfreville," and "le Sir d' Onfrei" in 1091. Then afterward, several families were prominent in various civic and other positions, and resided upon extensive estates in various parts of England and Wales.

It is well known that King Henry IV. married Mary de Bohun, a descendant of Humphrey de Bohun, who had settled in Midhurst, Essex, and that the infant King Henry VI., son of Henry V., was committed to the care of his uncles the dukes of Bedford and Gloucester. The Duke of Gloucester was popularly known as the "Good Duke

Lead Ornamentation in the Windows of the Old Humphreys House

Humphrey" and wielded his regency in England with much approbation from the people.[1]

The fact of the early fame of their ancestors is traced by the authors of the work cited in the footnote with much care, and authorities cited for its statements. The lineage of present English families is given, including John Richard Humfray, Esq., of Penllyne Castle, Glamorganshire; Henry Revel Humfray, of the Place, Newmarket, Suffolk; William Humphrey of Llwyn, Montgomeryshire; Robert Blake Humfrey of Wroxham House, Norfolkshire; John Keys Humfrey, Cavancor, County Donegal, Ireland.

The American ancestry of David Humphreys was of sturdy New England stock; Michael Humphrey was among the early settlers of Windsor, one of the three towns which formed the original colony of Connecticut. In 1743 he was engaged in the manufacture of tar and turpentine with John Griffin, at Massaco (now Simsbury). As his name does not appear upon any list of the persons who emigrated from Dorchester, Massachusetts, to the banks of the Connecticut, it has been supposed that he came directly from England in his own vessel and sailed up the Connecticut to Windsor. A letter from his father and mother written from Lyme, "24th day of January 1648," shows that they were then living in the Dorsetshire seaport, one hundred and forty-three miles south-west of London and that their names were Samuel and Susana. A careful search of the parish registers and the records of the "Peculiar Court of Lyme-Regis," fails to give any information in regard to them. An examination of the registers of wills at Exeter and Salisbury shows that their wills, if they made any, were never filed and registered. The whole subject of the English line of the family is thus an unsolved problem although probabilities, and the coats

[1] *The Humphrey Family in America*, Part 1, pp. 1–17, 242.

of arms borne in the various branches of the family, identify it with the families of that name living in the south of England in Devonshire and Dorsetshire.

Michael Humphrey's brother Samuel lived at St. Malo on the coast of Brittany, nearly opposite Lyme-Regis. With his partner, Henry Rose, he regularly consigned merchandise to Michael at Windsor, which found a ready sale. It is probable that it was frequently exchanged for the tar and turpentine which Michael Humphrey manufactured, and by the sale of which he derived a comfortable income.

He lived upon his home lot in the "Pound Close" just outside the "North Line of the Palisado or fortification which had been set up on the North side of the Little Rivulet as a defence against surprisal by the Indians during the Pequot War in 1637."[1]

Mr. Humphrey appears to have been respected by his fellow townsmen. He held firmly to his religious and political convictions, which may have been the reason that he waited until May 21, 1657, before becoming a freeman of the town. He married, on October 14, 1647, Priscilla, daughter of Matthew Grant, of Windsor. Seven children were born to them:

John, born June 7, 1650; died January 14, 1697–8.
Mary, born October 24, 1653.
Samuel, born May 15, 1656; died June 15, 1736.
Sarah, born March 6, 1658–9.
Martha, born October 5, 1663.
Abigail, born March 23, 1665–6; died January 27, 1697.
Hannah, born October 21, 1669.[2]

[1] *The Humphrey Family*, p. 102, quoted there from Stiles's *History of Ancient Windsor*, p. 132.

[2] *The Humphrey Family*, p. 112.

There were some of the settlers who did not join themselves to the church of the town by signing and assenting to its particular confession of faith. They considered that their membership in the Church of England was sufficient to entitle them to church privileges and claim baptism for their children. The theory of Congregationalism and the Cambridge Platform of 1648 conferred sacramental rites only upon those who were under the covenant. Thus the children of those persons who were not members of the local church could not receive the rite. Brought up as these settlers had been in England, and regarding Holy Baptism as essential, they were both hurt and aggrieved when their request for the baptism of their children was refused. In 1664, Michael Humphrey with James Eno, John Moses and Jonas Westover of Windsor, together with William Pitkin and John Stedman of Hartford, and Robert Reeve whose residence has not been fully ascertained, joined in a petition "To the Hon. Gen. Assembly of the Corporation of Connecticut in New England," in which they state that they are "Professors of the Protestant Christian Religion, members of the Church of England, and under those sacred ties mentioned and contained in our Covenant sealed with our Baptism." They have

seriously pondered our past and present want of those Ordinances wh to us and our Children as members of Christs vissible Church ought to bee administered. Which wee Apprehend to bee to the Dishonour of God and the obstruction of our owne and our Childrens good. . . . Our aggreiuance is that wee and ours are not under the Due care of an orthodox Ministry that will in a due manner administer to us those ordinances that we stand capable of, as the Baptizeing of our Children, our beeing admitted (as wee according to Christs order may bee found meete) to the Lord's table. . . . Wee humble Request that this Honrd Court

would take into Serious Consideration our present state in this respect, that wee are thus as sheep scattered haueing no Shepherd, and compare it with what we conceiue you cannot but know both God and our King would haue it different from what it now is And take some Speedy and effectuall Course for redress herein. And put us in a full and free capacity of enjoying those forementioned Aduantages which to us as members of Christ's uissible Church doe of right bellong. By Establishing som wholesome Law in this Corporation, by uertue whereof wee may both claime and receiue of such officers as are or shall bee by Law set ouer us in the Church or Churches where wee haue our abode or residence those fore mentioned priuileges and advantages.

ffurthermore wee humbly request that for the future no Law in this Corporation may be of any force to make us pay or contribute to the maintaineance of any Minister or officer in the Church that will neglect or refuse to Baptise our Children, and to take care of us as such members of the Church as are under his or their Charge and care.

The petition, dated October 17th, was presented to the General Court sitting at Hartford.[1]

The disturbed state of the country and the frequent complaints that had reached them upon this subject, led to a serious consideration of the Petition, and the passage of a resolution recommending the ministers and churches in this colony to consider, "whether it be not their duty to entertaine all such persons who are of an honest and goodly conversation and that they have their children baptized."

The Petition has been much discussed and was for a long time misunderstood. It was thought that these reputable citizens desired to introduce a priest of the Church of England and wished their property exempted for that purpose. But their subsequent course shows that all they

[1] The original will be found in the *Connecticut State Archives*, Ecclesiastical, I, Doc. 106. An accurate transcript is in *The Humphrey Family*, II., pp. 104–5.

requested was to become members of the existing church organizations without submitting to an examination as to their piety and worth and a formal assent to its confession of Faith. The action of the Court was not mandatory and practically referred the matter back to the church at Windsor. Its suggestions were followed, and thus what was known as the "Half Way Covenant" was introduced, which made its way slowly into favour in the Congregational Church of the colony. "Many hesitated for years and others utterly refused to adopt it into practice."[1]

Michael Humphrey removed before 1670 to Massaco, where his business was, when that part of the town of Windsor was erected into a separate township by the name of Simsbury. His homestead was in that portion of the town known as Weatogue. He died previous to 1695. The exact date is not known. He transmitted to his descendants several traits of character, notably industry, perseverance, and thrift which have ever since distinguished them.

His son John, whose military services gave him the appellation of "Sergeant John," continued his father's business, in which he prospered. He married Hannah, the daughter of Sergeant John Griffin, his father's partner, and had seven children.[2]

After holding numerous town offices and retaining the

[1] Stiles, *History of Ancient Windsor*, p. 170. A full discussion will be found on pp. 170–3.

[2] John, born Nov. 18, 1671; died Dec. 31, 1732.
Mary, born April 14, 1674.
Thomas, born Sept. 11, 1676; died Oct. 23, 1714.
Abigail, born November 8, 1678.
Nathaniel, born March 3, 1680.
Samuel, born 1684; died September 20, 1685.
Joseph, born , who married Abigail Griffin.
The first five children are recorded in the earliest record book of Simsbury known as the "Red Book." See *Humphrey Family*, p. 115.

respect of his townsmen, and the affection of his family, he died January 24, 1697–8.

His son John lived upon the old home plot and was an active and useful member of the community. He seems to have engaged more extensively in farming than his father or his grandfather. He served in several town offices and was for two years the Town Clerk. He was prominent in the affairs of the church and was one of its deacons, from which office he received the title of "Deacon John." He was chosen, 1718, one of the committee "to seat the meeting house." This was a peculiar New England custom. Although nominally all were equal in the house of God and the salary of the minister was derived from the rate fixed upon the property of the town, still custom regulated the seats which should be occupied by each family. The minister's family was assigned the most eligible seat and the others were allotted by a committee chosen by the congregation from whose decision there was no appeal. There might be jealousies and unfair discriminations, there might be invidious distinctions, but all had to submit in silence to the judgment of the committee.

Deacon John Humphrey married on July 6, 1699, Sarah Mills, the widow of John Mills, and the daughter of John Pettibone, the senior, of Simsbury. Five children were born to them, of whom Daniel, afterward the minister of Derby, and the father of David, was the youngest.[1]

Daniel married Sarah, widow of John Bowers, and had five children, the youngest being David, the subject of this memoir.

[1] John, born March 17, 1700–01; died November 2, 1760.
Hannah ; died December 7, 1721.
Benjah, born December 20, 1701; died August 4, 1772.
Michael, born November 20, 1703; died 1778.
Daniel, born in 1707; died September 2, 1787.
The Humphrey Family, pp. 116–18.

Daniel, born May 18, 1740; married Mary King; died Sept. 30, 1827.

John, born January 3, 1744; married Rachel Durand; died February 18, 1832.

Elijah, born April 27, 1746; married Anna Mansfield; died July 2, 1785.

Sarah, born July 29, 1748; married the Rev. Samuel Mills who died in 1814 and his widow married Chipman Swift in 1819. She died March 31, 1827.

David, born July 10, 1752; married Anne Frances Bulkley; died February 21, 1818.

Daniel Humphrey occupied a most honourable position in the community as the beloved pastor of "the first Church of Christ." In Colonial Connecticut the ministers of the "Standing Order," that is, those who served in the Congregational or Presbyterian Churches as they were sometimes called, had their rights confirmed by law. All other forms of religious belief were styled dissent. To "sober dissenters" certain exemptions from taxation for the support of the ministers of the several towns were granted by act of the General Assembly. There was, however, no complete freedom in religion, until the last vestige of the supremacy of the Congregational Churches was taken away in the new Constitution of 1818.[1]

The minister of the town was not only pastor of his congregation but also the leader in educational, social, and town affairs. As the learned element of the community he was looked up to by the people with profound respect.

[1] For a summary of the early disabilities and inconveniences of members of the "Churches of England," see pp. 16, 17, 23, 26, 57, 61, of *The History of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut from the Settlement Of The Colony To The Death Of Bishop Seabury*, By Edward Beardsley, D.D., Rector Of St. Thomas' Church, New Haven, vol. i., Third Edition, Published by Hurd and Houghton, Cambridge, Riverside Press. 8vo., pp. XXIX., 470. 1874.

To many his word was law; he was the arbiter of the disputes and disagreements and usually exercised his authority in a judicious and discreet manner.

Mr. Humphrey had the full confidence of the people of Derby. They recognized in him strength of character and independence of action. From the day of his settlement on March 6, 1734, to his death on September 2, 1787, at the age of eighty, there seemed to have been nothing to disturb the harmony and peace between himself and his congregation. A graduate of Yale in the class of 1732, an ardent student and well equipped scholar, he was not averse to the reception of new truth. He was ready to discern the signs of the time and examine for himself the presentation of the Gospel by Wesley and others who aroused the conscience of New England and divided it religiously into two camps. Mr. Humphrey's attitude towards the "New Lights" was one of friendly intercourse and serious inquiry as to the value of their peculiar tenets. This liberality and his willingness to officiate in "separate" meetings brought him at various times under the censure of the New Haven East Association.[1]

An appreciative notice in the New Haven Gazette, of September 6, 1787, says of Mr. Humphreys:

> He was possessed of a masculine understanding, particularly calculated to reason and distinguish. His manners instead of being tinctured with the austere gloom of superstition exhibited that hilarity which made him the delight of his acquaintance. A consciousness of internal rectitude was productive of cheerfulness and serenity; a desire of making others happy was the effect of philanthropy and religion. These conspired to give him a peculiar facility and dignity of

[1] *Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of Connecticut prepared under the direction of the General Association to commemorate the completion of One Hundred and Fifty Years since its first assembly*, p. 323. New Haven: Published by Wm. Kingsley, 1851. 8vo. pp. XIV., 562.

behaviour on every occasion. The honourable discharge of all the duties of the domestic, the social, the sacred functions; and the undeviating practice of unaffected piety, through a long life, will be the best comment on his creed and complete his character.[1]

The Rev. Dr. Stiles, President of Yale College during the later years of Mr. Humphrey's life, occasionally officiated for him, as appears from his published *Diary*.[2]

On January 28, 1781, he makes this entry, "Preached all day at Darby for good Mr. Humphrey"; and he also notices the funeral ceremonies occurring September 4, 1787:

Rode over to Darby & attended the Funeral of the Revd Daniel Humphreys. The Corps was carried into the Meet^{g} House, the service begun by Prayer by Dr. Edw^{ds}. Then the 71st Ps. Watts was sung. The Rev^{d} Mr. Leavenworth preached on 2 Tim. Iv, 6–8 an hour & 5′. After Prayer an Anthem from 7th Chapter of Job. One hour & three Qu^{rs} in Exercise. Procession to the Grave. After Interment, I made a Speech at the desire of Col Humphreys & Family. Returned home—Twelve Ministers attended the Funeral & a numerous Concourse.

Mrs. Daniel Humphrey, or Lady Humphrey as she was popularly called throughout the countryside, was the daughter of Captain John and Elizabeth (Tomlinson) Riggs, and was born in Derby on December 17, 1711. She married John Bowers on November 22, 1732, and had by him two children; Nathaniel, who died May 6,

[1] This obituary is reprinted by Professor Dexter in his *Yale Biographies and Annals, 1701–1745*, p. 459.

[2] *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*. Edited under the authority of the Corporation of Yale University by Franklin Bowditch Dexter, M.A. Three Volumes, New York, 1901. Vol. iii., p. 280.

1738, and Sarah who was born on August 8, 1736 and died December 3, 1738. John Bowers died January 26, 1738, and on April 18, of the following year, his widow married the Rev. Daniel Humphrey.[1]

She was a descendant of Sergeant Edward Riggs who settled in the wilderness then known as Paugassett, the Indian name for Derby, in 1654. He was one of the little band who in 1637, under Col. John Mason, destroyed the Pequot Fort in Groton and thus saved the settlements.

He is also associated with that romantic incident of early New English history, the wanderings and concealment of three of the Judges who condemned Charles I. to death, General William Goffe, General Edward Whalley, and Colonel John Dixwell, in and around New Haven, from June, 1661, to October, 1664. His house, which was forted or palisaded in, to secure it from the Indians, "was one of the places to which they came regularly for refuge from their pursuers."[2]

Lady Humphrey's sweetness and gentleness, combined with firmness and sound common sense, gave her a firm place in the hearts of her husband's parishioners, and all who knew her. Her natural dignity, elegance, refinement, intelligence, and aristocratic deportment, had won for her as we have seen the title of "Lady," and more perfect ornament to that title was probably not known in the community.[3]

With such parents, we are not surprised that David achieved for himself, and at a very early period, so distinguished a place among the founders of the United States.

[1] *History of Derby*, pp. 592, 703; also *The Humphrey Family in America*, p. 129.

[2] *A History of Three Judges of King Charles I., Major General Whalley, Major General Goffe and* Colonel *Dixwell*, p. 113, by Pres. Stiles. Hartford: Printed by Elisha Babcock, 1794.

[3] *History of Derby*, p. 592.

His shrewdness, industry, indefatigability, he inherited from his father, while his mother dowered him with her love for beautiful things. His passion for poetry, his love for art, his distinguished bearing and aristocratic tastes all came from "Lady" Humphrey.

CHAPTER II

Early Days

Ministers of New England in the Eighteenth Century—Manner of Living—Education—Schoolhouses—Special Opportunities of David Humphreys—Daniel Humphrey, Jr.—Entrance of David at Yale—Character of the Instruction at Yale—The Rev. Thomas Clap—Dr. Daggett—Yale in 1767—Seniors and Freshmen—The Freshmen Laws.

IN those early days, the Ministers of New England, who usually had large families, would often supplement their salary, which was generally small and irregularly paid, by cultivating the farm which they had received as "settlement land." Many became expert farmers, and their sons efficient helpers. This manual labour was not allowed to interfere with their hours for study and meditation, or the regular round of pastoral work. Their diligence and thrift often enabled them to give their sons a college education, and their daughters the training they thought necessary to fit them for home life.

The boys and girls attended school for a few weeks in the late fall and winter, and the younger children were sent for a short summer term. Young men who were working their way through college were often employed for brief periods, and at other times some respected citizen of the town would condescend to keep the village school. The law school of the Colony of Connecticut provided that "A tax of forty shillings on every thousand pounds of the lists of the estates" should be paid into the

Colonial Treasury, and then distributed proportionately to the number of children to the various towns. In towns having seventy families the schools were to be kept for eleven months in the year, and a less number of families for at least six months. The authorization for the selectmen to divide the towns into suitable districts for the convenience of those attending the schools was given by the General Assembly in 1766.[1]

Soon after the passage of this act, the town of Derby was laid out into nine school districts. Mr. Humphrey's homestead was in the first,

> which was on the east side of Naugatuck River and shall be bound westerly on the Great River and Naugatuck River, southerly and easterly on Milford line, northerly the line shall begin half way between the Rev. Mr. Daniel Humphrey's dwelling house, and Mr. Curtis's dwelling house, and so a west line to Naugatuck River, and so run north eastward forty rods north westerly of Mr. Joseph Loveland's dwelling house, and thence an east line to Milford line,—forty seven families.[2]

The teaching given in the primitive schoolhouses, with their desks running around three sides of the room, so that the pupils had to face the wall when studying, and the teacher's high desk and stool near the centre of the room, was of a most rudimentary character. Arithmetic, popularly called "ciphering," was taught to the older pupils. There were few text-books, and the teacher would often write for his pupils their sums, and show them how to do them. Dilworth's *School Master's Assistant*, published in England in 1743, was the book then used by many schoolmasters in teaching arithmetic. There was little more attempted in explaining the theory of pen-

[1] *Report of the Board of Education*, State of Connecticut, 1901, Public Document 8, Hartford Press, 1901, pp. 20–21.

[2] *History of Derby*, p. 15).

manship than setting a copy and expecting the pupil to write an exact imitation of it. In reading, only two books were known in the schoolhouse. The young child was given the *New England Primer* to master, with its wondrous woodcuts, its fascinating pictures of John Rogers, the martyr, bound to the stake, while his wife and children stand near by, weeping, and men are piling faggots at the base of the stake. The little book had many excellencies, some quaint rhymes, and also much sound moral and religious teaching.[1]

When that had been thoroughly mastered the Psalter was given them to read, and they were drilled in the various psalms until they knew them by heart. Toward the end of the eighteenth century Webster's Spelling Book replaced Dilworth's, which had been used since 1740, and from which many words of learned length and thundering sound "were hurled at the trembling children on the days when they spelled down." There was no attempt to teach the principles of English grammar, or of the structure of the language. For the girls, there was also instruction by the schoolmistresses, who often taught, during the summer terms, sewing and fine needlework. With such instruction many had to be content. For those who, like the young David, had a learned father, there was patient drilling in the Latin Grammar at home, there was instruction in rhetoric and English Grammar, and from the shelves of the small but well-chosen library, the choice volumes of the *Spectator*, or the latest poem or essay of Dr. Johnson were taken down, and placed in the hands of the boys to form their taste. It is said that David was exceptionally and passionately fond of books, and from a very early age showed a desire for knowledge.

[1] Mr. Paul Leicester Ford published an edition of this book facsimile, with an elaborate historical introduction, notes, and comments. New York, Dodd, Mead & Co.

His father's scholarly attainments, choice collection of books to which the boy had access, and the short distance from Derby (eleven miles) to the large library of Yale College, whose four thousand volumes included the standard classical, patristic, and English literature, allowed him to gratify his taste. He was able, therefore, to read the best books of the period. It had been Mr. Humphrey's happiness to send his oldest son, Daniel, to Yale College, from which he graduated with honours at the age of seventeen. He had observed with pleasure his successful career as a teacher and a lawyer.

Daniel was born May 18, 1740, in Derby. He graduated from Yale College in 1757, and studied law with the Hon. James Hillhouse of New Haven. After practising for a short time, he turned his attention to teaching, and was married in 1769 to Mary, daughter of William King, of Portsmouth, N. H. For about two years after his marriage he taught in Connecticut. He opened, about 1775, a classical school in New York, which was well patronized by the children of the leading families. In 1783 he settled in Portsmouth, N. H., as a lawyer, and was appointed in 1804 United States Attorney for the district of New Hampshire, which office he held until his death. He was a man of great benevolence and kindness, ready to aid the poor, and all who were in distress. He gained the full confidence of his fellow lawyers, and of the whole town. In religion he was a strict Calvinist, and a disciple of Robert Sandeman. He was, for a number of years, the teacher of the little flock of Sandemanians in Portland, and died on September 30, 1827, in the eighty-eighth year of his age. He wrote a rhymed English Grammar, and several pamphlets defending the Sandemanian tenets.[1]

Much as he had done for his oldest boy, the Reverend

[1] Condensed from *The Humphrey Family in America*, p. 115, and Prof. F. B. Dexter's *Yale Annals*, ii., p. 471.

Daniel wished to do even more for his youngest. He fitted David with great care for entrance to Yale before his fifteenth year. From its first foundation as the Collegiate School at Saybrook in 1701, the institution which received its name from that of Governor Elihu Yale, a liberal benefactor, had been noted for the great care it took in the training of young men. It had definite aims in its instruction, primarily intended to give a learned ministry to Connecticut, and it had attracted many students who were designed for an active professional or mercantile life. Its Rectors had been men eminent for their piety and learning, its Alumni distinguished in the Church, at the Bar, or in the social or business world. Under the last Rector of the Collegiate School, the Rev. Thomas Clap, there had been a great improvement in methods of teaching and an enlargement of the curriculum.

By his efforts, a chapel, and a new building known as Connecticut Hall, for the use of the students, had been erected. He showed the inadequacy of the former charter, and a new one was granted with ample powers, by the General Assembly, in May, 1745, incorporating the school as a college, of which Mr. Clap became the President. His zeal and practical turn of mind, as well as his great intellectual capacity, caused a large increase in the number of students which continued until the controversies over the control of the religious tenets of the students, the restraining them from attending separate meetings, and compelling all students to attend the service of the College Church, unless members of the Church of England, or some other recognized religious body, grew more bitter and personal. The anxious and excited state of the colonies after the close of the French and Indian wars had a tendency to decrease the number of those desiring a collegiate education. President Clap chose with great discrimination the tutors under whose charge the students

were placed during the first three years of their course. The young men who at that time expected to enter Yale College had to be able to construe and parse Tully's Orations, Virgil, and the Greek Testament, and understand the rules of common Arithmetic.[1]

The college course covered four years. Each class, or section of a class when it was very large, was under the constant supervision of a special tutor, to whom it recited in every study. In the first year the student was expected to master the elements of Hebrew, study the Latin poets, especially Horace, construe the more difficult portions of the New Testament in Greek, and construe Xenophon's *Anabasis*. He was also to make a beginning in Logic, and continue his mathematical work, probably completing the elements of Algebra.

The second year was largely given to logic, and the higher mathematics, particularly Geometry, Trigonometry, Surveying, Navigation, and the calculation of Eclipses. A few students in this year became proficient in the Conic Sections and Fluxions. The third year continued the studies of the second, and practically completed the course in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, Logic, and Mathematics. The fourth year the students came under the personal instruction of the President, and their attention was given largely to Metaphysics, Ethics and Divinity.

In addition to the work of the classroom, the Junior and Senior classes held disputations with the President, or one of the tutors, every Monday, "in the Syllogistic Form," and every Tuesday, "in the Forensic, which gives

[1] "The Annals and History of Yale College in New Haven, in the Colony of Connecticut, from the first founding thereof in the year 1701, to the year 1766. With an Appendix, containing the present state of the College, the method of instruction and government, with the Officers, Benefactors, and Graduates, by Thomas Clap, A.M., of the said College, New Haven; printed for John Hotchkiss and B. Macon, MDCCLXVI," pp. 80–82.

a greater scope to their genius, and is better adapted to the common use and practice of mankind in the conduct of public affairs."

These exercises gave them a facility of expression, clearness of thought, and an orderly method of presenting a subject. The Moderator, who was usually the President, summed up the debate showing the strength or weakness of the argument, and gave the formal decision on the question. The subjects "were taken from the whole circle of Literature, and upon almost all the doubtful points, which have been publicly disputed among mankind." Twice a week, five or six of the students in rotation, "delivered a declamation, *Memoriter*, from the oratorical rostrum." These were minutely criticized by the President, both as to manner of delivery and subject. He also "sometimes gave some small laurel to him who best acts the part of orator."

"These declamations, which are supposed to be original, are beforehand supervised by the Tutor, who corrects the orthography and punctuation." Upon every "Quarter Day," at Examination, and on special occasions, orations were also given. The handwriting of the students was also carefully inspected by the President, who to train them up to "an agreeable style and method of writing," directed them, "when any one has business of special importance with him, they should make application in the form of a letter."

Realizing that while the education of young men for the Holy Ministry had been the chief design of the founders, yet as many of the students "are designed for various other and important stations in civil life," it was the excellent plan of President Clap

to make frequent and public dissertations upon every subject necessary to be understood, to qualify young gentlemen for

those various stations and employments, such as the nature of Civil Governments, the Civil Constitution of Great Britain, the various kinds of courts and offices, superior and inferior, the several kinds of law by which the kingdom is governed, as the Statute, Common, Civil, Canon, Military, and Maritime laws, together with their various origins and extents; the several forms of ecclesiastical government which have obtained in the Christian Church; Ancient History and Chronology; the nature and form of obligatory writings and instruments, agriculture, commerse and navigation; with some general sketches upon Physics, Anatomy, Heraldry and Gunnery, so far as it falls under the rules of Philosophy and Mathematics, so that every one educated here might have at least a general and superficial knowledge of every important affair of life, and be directed to those books which may give a more complete knowledge of that particular art and science which may be most agreeable to his own genius or profession.

President Clap took a much broader view of the obligations which the head of the collegiate body had to the students, and his responsibility for the symmetrical development of their intellects, than was usual at that period. No other College President took upon himself such a task, few others were competent for it—the first president of Yale was a man of much erudition, a clear thinker, an agreeable speaker. By these lectures the wavering minds of some of the students were definitely fixed upon a future career. Surely, without satire, the words of Goldsmith may be applied to him.

> And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
> That one small head could carry all he knew.

Wearied with the strife and debate that had been thought necessary by him to maintain the College in its integrity, to defend it against the attacks of the "New Lights," the intrusions of the General Assembly of the

Colony, the aggressions of "Episcopacy" and the effort to uphold, in connection with the ten Fellows who then constituted the Corporation of Yale College, the strict orthodoxy of the Connecticut Churches, and their adherence to the tenets of the Saybrook Platform, Thomas Clap, in September, 1766, resigned the presidency. His action was received with many expressions of appreciation and regret. He found a collegiate school, and he left a college; he found inadequate buildings, and he added a commodious chapel, and a spacious college hall, the only one of the ancient buildings still standing on the College Campus, the well-known "South Middle."[1]

President Clap did not long survive his withdrawal from active service, for he died on January 7, 1767. Upon his tombstone in the old College lot in the Grove Street Cemetery can still be read, in the sonorous sentences of that period, his epitaph, which contains more truth than such productions usually do, when it says that he was "a gentleman of superior natural genius, most assiduous application, and indefatigable industry, in the various branches of learning he greatly excelled; an accomplished instructor, a patron of the College, a great Divine, bold for the truth."[2]

He is justly considered one of the greatest Presidents of Yale. Upon the day of President Clap's resignation, the Corporation elected the Rev. James Lockwood of Wethersfield, as President. On his refusal to accept the office, the Rev. Napthali Daggett, who had been for ten years the Willoughby Professor of Divinity, which gave

[1] The corner-stone was laid April 17, 1750; the building was completed in September, 1752, and dedicated at the Commencement. It contained, when built, thirty-two chambers, and sixty-four studies.

[2] The epitaph is given in the *Connecticut Historical Collections*, by John Warner Barber, New Haven, published by Duryie & Peck, and J. Warner Barber, 1838, p. 189.

him the spiritual oversight of the students, was elected President, "Pro Tempore."

The Hon. Elizur Goodrich, LL.D., Professor of Law in Yale College, and for many years Secretary of the Corporation, who died in 1849, in his eighty-ninth year, gives this amusing story current among the students when he was in college, 1775–1779. "Good-morning, Mr. President, Pro Tempore," said one of his clerical brethren, on some public occasion, bowing very profoundly, and laying a marked emphasis on the closing words of his title. "Did you ever hear of a President Pro Æternitate?" said the old gentleman in reply, raising himself up with an assumed air of stateliness and turning the laugh of the whole company on his assailant.[1]

He accepted, and entered immediately upon his duties, with the understanding that he should be relieved of his double duty whenever a suitable person could be found for the presidency. Without the natural ability or acquired gifts of his predecessor, he was a man of erudition, and a sound divine. While his administration was careful and painstaking, he was not fitted to cope with the peculiar situation of the College at that time. Such was the condition of Yale College, when in the fall of 1767, David Humphreys and eighteen other young men were matriculated. They were all from families of distinction in the Colony. They found, in the upper classes, many men of scholarship and great promise, among them Timothy Dwight, Nathan Strong, Joseph Buckminster. It was the custom of the day, however, to keep the Freshmen secluded from the other students. They were bound by rules which had been in force from the beginning of the College, and were instructed to look upon the upper class-

[1] Letter of the Hon. Elizur Goodrich, appended to sketch of the Rev. Dr. Daggett, in the Rev. Wm. B. Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*, p. 480.

men as "Superiors," and pay them due deference. They were to remain uncovered in their presence, they were to do "all reasonable errands" for them, "they were not to enter their rooms without knocking, and were to stand silently until spoken to. They were to yield to them in any narrow passage or stairway, the most convenient side. They were not to run in college yard, or up and down stairs, or to call to any one through the college windows." They as well as other undergraduates are to be uncovered, "except in stormy weather," when "in the front door yard of the President's or Professor's house, or within ten rods of the Professor, and five rods of a tutor."

Permission was given to the Seniors to teach the Freshmen the Laws, Usages, and Customs of the College. While these laws were in operation there was evidently an intention to carry into college life in America, some of the traditions and customs of the great English Public Schools. As a spirit of independence began to assert itself in the New England Colonies, it was reflected in student life, and poor President Daggett found himself, even by the imposition of large fines, which was the chief penalty for any infraction of college rules, unable to control the undergraduates. It was not until 1804, during the administration of President Dwight, that the "Freshmen laws" were suffered to fall into innocuous desuetude, and the students placed upon their honour as gentlemen. The extracts in the text are made from a rare broadside preserved in Yale College Archives entitled, "Freshmen Laws"; they are eleven in number. This sheet, which is reproduced on the opposite page, measures thirteen by eight and a half inches. At the end of the laws, is this imprint—"New Haven, printed by Daniel Bowen, near the college in Chapel Street." This is the earliest known printed form of the Laws. Daniel Bowen's printing office was established about 1786, which is the date assigned to

Freſhman Laws.

EVERY Freſhman, after his admiſſion into YALE-COLLEGE, is required to conform to the following Regulations, eſtabliſhed by Authority for the preſervation of Decency and good Order.

I. It being the Duty of the Seniors to teach Freſhmen the Laws, Uſages and Cuſtoms of the College, to this end they are empowered to order the whole Freſhman Claſs, or any particular Member of it, to appear, in order to be inſtructed or reproved, at ſuch Time and Place as they ſhall appoint; when and where every Freſhman ſhall attend, anſwer all proper Queſtions, and behave decently. The Seniors, however, are not to detain a Freſhman more than Five Minutes after Study-Bell, without ſpecial Order from the Preſident, Profeſſor or Tutor.

II. The Freſhmen are to ſhew all proper Reſpect to the Officers of College, the Reſidentiary Graduates and undergraduate Claſſes ſuperior in ſtanding to themſelves.

III. The Freſhmen, as well as all other Undergraduates, are to be uncovered and are forbidden to wear their Hats (unleſs in ſtormy weather) in the front door-yard of the Preſident's or Profeſſor's Houſe, or within Ten Rods of the Perſon of the Preſident, Eight Rods of the Profeſſor, and Five Rods of a Tutor.

IV. The Freſhmen are forbidden to wear their Hats in College-Yard (except in ſtormy weather, or when they are obliged to carry ſomething in their Hands) until May Vacation; nor ſhall they afterwards wear them in College or Chapel.

V. No Freſhman ſhall wear a Gown, or walk with a Cane, or appear out of his Room without being completely dreſſed, and with his Hat; and whenever a Freſhman either ſpeaks to a ſuperior, or is ſpoken to by one, he ſhall have his Hat off, until he is bidden to put it on. A Freſhman ſhall not play with any Members of the Upper Claſs, without being aſked; nor is he permitted to uſe any Acts of familiarity with them, even in Study-Time.

VI. In Caſe of perſonal Abuſe a Junior may call up a Freſhman and reprehend him. A Sophomore in like Caſe muſt obtain Leave from a Senior, and then he may diſcipline a Freſhman, not exceeding three Minutes, after which the Freſhman may retire, ever without being diſmiſſed, but not without a reſpectful Manner.

VII. All Orders [illegible] when the Freſhmen are [illegible] they take up their Hats after Public Exercises, until all their Superiors have gone out.

VIII. All Undergraduates are to be called by their Sur-Names. Gentlemen of Arts have the title of [illegible] to their Names, in their own Mother-Tongue. Maſters of Arts

IX. Freſhmen are obliged to perform all [illegible] any Superior, always returning an Account of the Buſineſs to the [illegible] When called, they ſhall attend and give a reaſonable Anſwer; and when [illegible] Superior, they are not to depart without Leave. They are [illegible] to any Thing but what is their Buſineſs, by way of Errand. They are not obliged to go for the Undergraduates in Study-Time, without [illegible] Errand from the Adminiſtration; nor are they obliged to go for a Graduate out of the Yard in ſtudy-time. A ſenior may take a Freſhman from a ſophimore, a Bachelor from a Junior, and a Maſter from a ſenior. None may order a Freſhman in one play-time, to do an Errand in another.

X. If a Freſhman is called in an undergraduate in ſtudy-time, he ſhall not [illegible] not go out of his Room, until he [illegible] in his Room, that [illegible] obtained from the Preſident, Profeſſor or one of the Tutors. Nothing was Tutors are exempted from going Errands for any but the Adminiſtration.

XI. When a Freſhman is near a Gate or Door, [illegible] Yard, he ſhall look around, and if there be [illegible] the ſame; and if any are coming within three [illegible] to proceed. In paſſing up or down ſtairs, or through an entry or [illegible] paſſage, if a Freſhman meets a Superior, he ſhall [illegible] convenient ſide—if on the ſtairs the Freſhman [illegible] Yard, or up or down ſtairs, or call to any one through a College window. When going into the Chamber of a Superior, they ſhall knock at the door, and ſhall leave it as they find it, whether open or ſhut. Upon entering the Chamber of a Superior, they ſhall not ſpeak until ſpoken to, they ſhall [illegible] to all queſtions, and [illegible] their meſſages decently and reſpectfully. They ſhall not tarry in a Superior's room, after they are diſmiſſed, unleſs aſked to ſit. They ſhall [illegible] enters or leaves the room, where they are, and not ſit in his preſence until permitted.

Theſe Rules are to be obſerved not only about College, but every where elſe within the limits of the City of New-Haven.

NEW-HAVEN: Printed by DANIEL BOWEN, near the COURT-HOUSE, in Chapel-Street.

A Facsimile of Freshmen Laws of Yale College

this copy. Previously, the Laws were promulgated by being read from the manuscript "Book of Customs," at regular intervals in the Chapel.[1]

The daily routine of college life in 1767 commenced with prayers in the Chapel at half-past five in the morning in the winter, and half-past four in the summer. The students attended soon after a recitation by one of their tutors. The greater portion of the undergraduates took their meals at the college commons, the purveyor being an officer known as the College Steward. They were served in the Hall, and are said to have been "generally agreeable." President Clap says "the tutors always, the President frequently, the fellows, and many other gentlemen occasionally, are entertained with it."[2]

The price of board for the students was "four shillings and six pence sterling a week." After breakfast, which was not later than seven, or half-past, there was leisure for study. Recitations occupied the remainder of the morning until dinner at noon. After this there was time for recreation and amusement, or "Play time," as the freshmen laws have it. Card playing was indulged in by some, others were fond of rich banquets, and still others were fond of outdoor sports, running, leaping and jumping. Leap-frog and other athletic exercises were engaged in. Nathan Hale, the patriotic spy, long held the record for high jumping.

The Rev. Dr. Samuel Peters, in his satire upon Connecticut people and customs, *A General History of Connecticut*, speaking of a slightly later period says: "the students have two hours play with foot-ball every day."[3]

[1] The *Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, 190:, vol. ii., pp. 277–481.

[2] President Clap's *Annals*, p. 84.

[3] Dr. Samuel Peters, *A General History of Connecticut*, p. 156. This famous volume, which excited much indignation in Connecticut, was written while Dr. Peters was living in London, after his flight from his parish at Hebron, Connecticut, on account of the "fanatic whigs." It was

There was at least one recitation in the afternoon before supper, which was between five and six o'clock. The evenings were spent in study, conversation, or those various other ways which students in every age have devised to make life happy and social, as well as noisy. David Humphreys soon showed that he was an excellent scholar, and took a high place in the class. It is to be regretted that no authentic college essays written by him at this period are extant. Local tradition speaks of him as a wit, and a poet, and highly esteemed by the President and tutors.

The tutors at that time were Stephen M. Mitchell, afterwards United States Senator and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Connecticut, Ebenezer Baldwin, and Job Lane.

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entitled *A General History of Connecticut*, by a Gentleman of the Colony, 8vo. London, 1781—second edition 1782.

There are several reprints: New Haven, Clarke & Co. 1829. New Haven 1838 The last edition, revised from Dr. Peters's manuscripts, edited by George Jarvis McCormick, was published in New York, D. Appleton & Co., 1877. It is claimed that Dr. Peters himself composed the specimens of early Colony laws given, which he calls the "Blue Laws."

CHAPTER III

College Days

David Humphreys at Yale—John Trumbull—Timothy Dwight—Joel Barlow—The Literary Societies—The Critonian—Honourable Fellowship Club—The Brothers in Unity—Linonia—Their Songs—The Commencement Exercises, 1771—The Old South Middle.

IT has been traditional to group together four of the Revolutionary poets, John Trumbull, Timothy Dwight, David Humphreys, and Joel Barlow, as contemporaries at college and as commencing, while engaged in deeper studies, their cultivation of the lyric muse by which they added fervour to the patriotism of the American soldiers and people. Judge Trumbull graduated in 1767, Joel Barlow in 1778. With Timothy Dwight, who graduated in 1769, David Humphreys formed an enduring friendship. They did undoubtedly engage in political squibs and nonsense verses, and parodies, as other poetically inclined students have done in more recent times, but we have nothing of his college days extant which calls for any special commendation. The practice of oratory and debate held a high place in the regard of the Yale students in the middle of the seventeenth century. To shine in debate and to sway in eloquence those who listened, was the ambition of many young men.

Humphreys was put forward in all orations and debating contests, as the representative of his class. There had

been from the time the College was removed in 1718, to New Haven, student debating and Literary Societies. The earliest known was the "Critonian," which was eclipsed by its younger rivals, but held a lingering existence until 1772. In 1753, "The Honourable Fellowship Club" was formed by William Wickham; the date assigned in the Society records, is September 12. It was confined in its membership to the upper class men, for the first ten years of its existence.

In the legendary history of the formation of the rival society, David Humphreys is made the champion of the "respectability and rights of the Freshmen." It is told with all the circumstances of a true tale that David Humphreys and several of his class mates applied for admission to the "Honourable Fellowship Club," but that they were indignantly and scornfully rejected. David Humphreys showed the injustice and absurdity of excluding Freshmen, and pleaded their cause so well that two Seniors, three Juniors, and two Sophomores saw the equity of his claim, and these then united with thirteen Freshmen to form a new society, which they called "The Brothers in Unity," and which was organized early in 1768. There seems to be no record of this society in its first period. It is known, however, that Oliver Stanley, a Senior, was the founder of it, and that David Humphreys and others belonged to it. But the reason why the eulogy at the funeral of Oliver Stanley, in 1813, should mention David Humphreys as the founder is entirely unknown.

The tradition is disproved by the records of the older society, which are extant. It was voted on February 5, 1767, to admit Freshmen to the "Honourable Fellowship Club."[1]

[1] *Four Years at Yale*, New Haven, 1871, p. 194. Also Professor Edward B. Coe, on Literary Societies in Yale, *Yale College, A Sketch of its History* by W. Kingsley, New York, 1879, vol. i., p. 504; vol. ii., p. 316, p. 554.

It was about 1780 that the club took the name by which it is best known, "Linonia," from the classical Goddess of Industry. The old tradition is alluded to in the following song of the "Brothers in Unity":

BROTHERS IN UNITY

By John Milton Holmes.[1]

Air—*Lauriger Horatius.*

Brothers all in Unity,
Knit by love's attraction,
Let us gird our armour on
Now's the time for action

Shake the old blue banner out,
Tell the world its story
Let our song and watchword be
Unity and Glory.

Let the fires of Auld Lang Syne
In all hearts be burning,
Fires of friendship, eloquence
Liberty and learning

Chorus.

Gather in the Candidates
Golden time is fleeting,
Give to each a brother's right
Give a brother's greeting.

Chorus.

Shall we basely bend the knee
To Linonia? Never!
Hand in hand we'll firmly stand
Victorious for ever.

Chorus

[1] Mr. Holmes, one of the most talented of Yale's younger graduates, was in the class of 1857. He entered the ministry, and died in 1871.

The Linonians promptly came out with this parody:

Air—*Lauriger Horatius.*

"Brothers all in Unity"
Mourning to distraction
Sitting round with faces *blue*[1]
Waiting strength for action

With their "old blue banner" down
So fling out the story
"This is all that's left behind
Of David Humphreys' glory."

While beneath their banner blue
Brother hosts draw near us
To Linonia's standard true
Soon that host will fear us.

And their banner in their flight
Shall tell their mournful story,
"This is all that's left behind
Of David Humphreys' glory."

"Linonia" invincible
Can, when e'er she pleases,
Pull that "old blue banner" down
And tear it all to pieces.

Pull that "old blue banner" down
And tell the world the story
"This is all that's left behind
Of David Humphreys' glory."

P. X. Q

[1] The colours of the "Brothers in Unity" were blue; "Linonia's," pink.

These Societies which did much to make clear thinkers, fluent speakers, and persuasive orators, died about thirty years ago, principally because of the increase of class societies, and the attractiveness of the famous secret organizations. David Humphreys passed the four years course with much renown from his contemporaries. We can picture him sitting with some favourite companion in the new Connecticut Hall, in one of the pleasant studies looking out upon the Green, then, as now, dear to all the citizens of New Haven, talking of the progress of poetry, of the dullness of the college fops, as his friend John Trumbull pictured them, of the prospects of relief from the oppression of the British Ministry, of the excellencies and defects of the kind-hearted Dr. Daggett, of the merits or shortcomings of the tutors, or perhaps indulging in day dreams of the life they would lead when the college days were over.

Finally, upon a bright Wednesday morning in September, 1771, came the last scene of the four years of toil and pleasure. New Haven was filled with guests, the Corporation had met in solemn state, approved the final examination of the Seniors, and all was ready for the Commencement Procession to the Centre Church upon the Green. The President in gown and bands, the ten Fellows, the most eminent ministers of the Colony, the students probably in gowns, the candidates for the Master's degree, and those especially invited, moved with slow and stately steps from Connecticut Hall. At the Church, prayer was offered by the Reverend President, and was followed by an elegant salutatory oration in Latin by Mr. Hart. "A syllogistic and then a forensic disputation was made in which thirteen members of the class took part. A dialogue was given by Mr. Gould and Mr. Woodbridge, which was followed by a beautiful and well composed oration in English on the advantages of economy and industry by Mr. Muirson."

An anthem was then sung by the Choir, and an especially chosen chorus, which brought to a close the morning exercises. A Commencement dinner in the College Hall was enjoyed by all. In the afternoon the Master's oration upon "The action of the pulpit" was pronounced by Mr. Lemuel L. C. Baron. A syllogistic disputation by some of the candidates for the Master's degree followed next, after which the class of 1771 received the degree of Bachelor of Arts conferred with due dignity and impressiveness by the President.[1]

The degree of Master of Arts was conferred upon members of the class of 1768, who applied for it, and also upon two graduates of Nassau Hall, New Jersey. After the degree had been conferred, the Valedictory Oration was delivered by Mr. Parsons. An anthem was then sung by a choir of students and Alumni, "to the acceptance of all present." With the pronouncing of the Benediction, the Commencement Exercises closed, and nineteen young men were sent forth to make for themselves a name and place in the busy world.[2]

The members of the class of 1771 were:

Joseph Barker,
Lewis Beebe,
John Brown,
William Burrall,
Abiel Cheney,
David Close,
Josiah Cotton,
Thomas Cutler,
James Nichols,
Henry Daggett,
William Gould,
John Hart,
David Humphreys,
Mark Leavenworth,
Allyn Mather,
Sylvester Muirson,
Daniel Olds,
Shadrach Winslow,
Joseph Woodbridge,

[1] As to facts, the text follows the accounts in the *Connecticut Journal and New Haven Post Boy*, of Friday, September 13, 1771.

[2] A copy of the broadside with the Commencement programme will be found in the Appendix. It was formerly preserved in the Yale College Archives.

The only Yale building now standing which was in existence in David Humphreys' time is the one known as "South Middle," a view of which is on the opposite page. As Humphreys during some part of his academic career must have lived in this building, a description of it may be appropriate.

Hemmed in by modern buildings of stone, of more artistic design, which are evidences of the gratitude and appreciation of Alumni and friends for Yale's contribution to the development of the scholar in the Republic, it stands alone as the veteran of the College Campus. It is a constant object lesson to those who now spend four years at College, enjoying comfort and a luxury unknown to their predecessors in the classic shades of New Haven. When President Clap, in May, 1747, petitioned the General Assembly to allow a lottery to be conducted for the purpose of erecting a new hall to accommodate the students who could not find room in the college buildings, it was his intention to make the structure durable, collegiate in its architecture, and a pleasant abiding place for the students. The General Assembly approved his design, and readily granted the lottery, which netted five hundred pounds sterling, "clear of all charges and deductions."

For its site he chose the most eligible portion of the Campus, and had it set back in the yard, that there might be "a large and handsome area before it." When the result of the lottery was shown, the General Assembly, in October, 1749,

ordered the payment to President Clap of three hundred and sixty three pounds, part of the proceeds of the sale of a French prize. In October, 1751, five hundred pounds more of this same prize money was also granted. A further sum of two hundred and eighty pounds of old debts due to the Government was in October 1754 given to the President towards building the new College.

On April 17, 1750, "The foundation of the house was laid." It is not stated whether the ceremony was a purely academic and social one, or whether the "Worshipful Master" and his assistants were called upon to lay properly the foundation stone. The building went on rapidly, until at the Commencement of 1752, early in September, the President and Fellows in recognition of the aid received for its erection from the Colonial Authorities, "though nothing came directly out of the public treasury," ordered that it should be called "Connecticut Hall."

Here also would gather the singers of the College, here wit and raillery would delight the listeners, and debates and discussions, and the many diversions which enliven college life might be enjoyed. Revolutionary patriots, Humphreys, Dwight, Barlow, Hale, Trumbull, Tallmadge, in their formative period, lived here. As the old "South Middle," but not then known by that name, was the most popular of the buildings in Humphreys' days, there was consequently keen competition to have the privilege of a room within its walls. It therefore came to be the unwritten law that only men in their last year should have the coveted privilege. What room young Humphreys occupied, we do not know; but that he did reside there during the last term is certain. It was from "Connecticut Hall" that young David went forth to fight and win in the battle of life.

Within a few years this College Dormitory has been restored and dedicated to Nathan Hale, who roomed in the same building.

Old South Middle, Yale College

CHAPTER IV

Beginning of the War

Humphreys Principal of Wethersfield School—His Patriotic Ardour—Goes to Philipse Manor as Tutor—The Philipses—His Environment at the Manor House—The Gathering of the Storm—His Visits to Yale—Takes his Degree—Declines Offer of a Tutorship at Yale—The Bursting of the Storm—Leaves Philipse Manor—Proscription of the Philipses and Confiscation of their Estates—His Return to Derby—Patriotism of his Brothers, John and Elijah—"Brother Jonathan"—Connecticut Militia Called to Arms—Liberty Poles—The First American Flags—The Connecticut Flag—Action of the Connecticut Assembly—The Capture of Ticonderoga—Gen. Lee and his Character—Connecticut's Independence—Her Troops Requested not to Enter New York State—Request Refused—They Enter New York City—Arrival of Gen. Putnam who Succeeds Gen. Lee in Command—Arrival of Gen. Washington—Gen. Putnam carries out Gen. Lee's Plans—Fortifies Governor's Island—Troops Quartered on "The Fields"—Brooklyn Fortifications—Connecticut's Quota—Her Colonels as Representative Men—Gen. Oliver Wolcott, Signer of the Declaration—Comparative Strength of the American and British Forces.

IT was an almost established custom in the Colony of Connecticut that the recent graduates of Yale should, before taking up their life work, teach in the few schools of a high grade in the larger towns. Their services were eagerly sought after by the town committees and boards of trustees.

The town of Wethersfield, beautifully situated upon the banks of the Connecticut River, was one of the three which formed the original colony of Connecticut. It was largely

given to agriculture and even then was noted for the excellence of its abundant crops of onions.

The town was divided into three ecclesiastical societies, Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, and Stepney. Each had its own Meeting House and Minister. In each "society" a school committee provided such school accommodations and teachers at the expense of the society as were necessary, the towns furnishing the sites for the schoolhouses.

The first society had within its jurisdiction the village of Wethersfield which contained three schoolhouses. One in the northern, another in the southern part of the town, and a third was the private enterprise of several members of the district known as "Windmill Hill."

The new schoolhouse on Main Street had been built by a few public spirited citizens to give their children better advantages than could be afforded by the ordinary district school. Here, a succession of Yale graduates taught, the course including a full study of arithmetic, a general review of English literature, an introduction to rhetoric and logic, and, with a few boys intended for college, a study of elementary Latin and Greek.

Much beside the wisdom of books could be imparted by an enthusiastic young man fresh from college. Opportunity would be found for many a dissertation in those days of brooding discontent over the insults and aggressions of the British Ministry upon the true freedom of the British subject, whether in England or on this side of the Seas.

The people of Connecticut were thoughtful and shrewd. They had for more than a century under the liberal charter granted by the British crown enjoyed free representative government. At home the children heard constant discussions by their elders on this burning topic. A schoolmaster, young, ardent, full of the theoretical applications of liberty which ever filled the young colle-

gian's breast would here find congenial soil for his teachings on the inalienable rights of freemen to a voice and vote in the government of the Nation. A perusal of the letters and speeches of this time show us how insistently the rights granted to the British speaking people by the Magna Charta were dilated on. In the early days, at any rate, the appeal was made to Law, the law of England and Englishmen, and because the accident of Seas separated them from the Mother country the men of New England never thought for one moment that the liberties of Magna Charta were limited by the confines of England. The liberties had been wrested from King and Pope for Englishmen and not for England; for men, not for the soil.

When young Humphreys, fresh from College, came to Wethersfield as the principal of the New School in Main Street, he came, as we say now, at the psychological moment. The tinder was there. He struck the spark. The lessons on History gave the young patriot ample opportunities. He could dilate on the History of the Colony, its illustrious origin, and proudly, and yet not without hidden meaning, which the parents, if not the children, would appreciate, point out its unique privilege of electing its own Governor—a privilege granted to no other Colony.

A love of their home would thus be increased and a determination formed in the minds of the scholars that nothing should impair or abridge the liberty they now enjoyed, nor any attempt be made to wrest from the Colony any of its chartered rights without forcible and effective resistance. David Humphreys with his love for freedom, with his enthusiasm and literary aspirations, with his natural and acquired knowledge was thoroughly furnished for the work he had to do in Wethersfield. There are no documents now available to give us details of his career as a schoolmaster, but the results are writ large in the after history of the Colony. The dispropor-

tionately large number of patriots who took up arms when the final struggle came with Great Britain is evidence that some unusual influence was at work in that town of Wethersfield.

In 1773 he left to assume strange and different duties in the family of the Lord of Philipse Manor on the Hudson River. He was fortunate, however, in that the work which he had begun was continued on the same lines. His successor, Benjamin Tallmadge, a graduate of Yale in that year, was called to Wethersfield, and if we may judge a man by his immediate after-career, he certainly continued the patriotic teachings of his predecessor. Tallmadge became, on leaving the schoolhouse, a gallant officer in the Revolutionary army, and his best title to the grateful remembrance of his countrymen is that he had the presence of mind to interrogate "John Anderson" near Tarrytown on that September morning in 1780, and to thus discover the treachery of Benedict Arnold and the identity of "John Anderson" with Major John André of the British army.[1]

It was a part of the policy of the Dutch West India Company when it settled its extensive domain, known as "Nieu Nederlandt," on both sides of the Hudson River, after its exploration by Henry Hudson in 1609, to grant wealthy merchants large tracts of land with baronial rights either by direct purchase or in return for a percentage of their products. The conditions were that the population upon those tracts was to be under the control of the lord of the manor and to hold everything according to feudal tenure. The manors of Van Rensselaer, Livingston, and Van Cortland covered the Upper Hudson.

Nearer New Amsterdam, Frederick Philipse had obtained a domain by grant and purchase. He was a member of a family originally from Friesland, but settled

[1] Col. Tallmadge's *Memoir*, p. 6.

for some time in the Netherlands, and held two connected tracts known as the upper and lower manors of Philipsburgh. A roomy, comfortable house, built after the Dutch fashion, about 1685 stood upon an eminence in the lower manor. Here the lord of the Manor lived in style and from it directed his farming and mercantile enterprise. He was in favour with the new masters, the English, and held several offices under the British crown. The land was rich and well cultivated, and as Frederick Philipse was an excellent man of business profitable trading ventures speedily increased his resources. Consequently his large family was comfortably provided for at his death. It was to his grandson, Col. Frederick Philipse, who was then the lord of the Manor, that young Humphreys went as tutor. The Colonel was a man of estimable character, and like his father, a capital man of business, and so increased his revenue that he was able to give rein to his innate generosity. At his own expense he not only built, but partially endowed, a church for the use of the members of the Church of England which is now known as St. John's Church, Yonkers. The Manor House had been enlarged and partially rebuilt and a new front added about 1745. The house still stands practically the same in appearance as it was in 1745. The city of Yonkers in 1868 purchased it for a City Hall. It has been slightly altered to adapt it to the use of the city officials, but its external appearance is little, if any, changed from what it was in Humphreys' day.

Col. Philipse had a family of eleven children and it was to teach the younger children that a tutor was needed. The position was in every respect pleasant. It made the tutor a member of a family united and affectionate. The society was courtly and dignified and no doubt did much to polish the manners of the lad fresh from college. To the Manor House there came constantly from New York,

men and women most prominent in official and social circles. Socially different as the atmosphere was in Humphreys' new home, it was yet more so politically. The young tutor would, it is true, hear discussed the probabilities of a rupture with England just as he had done at Derby and Wethersfield, but the standpoint of view was different. His new home was the rendezvous of the Tories, and the impertinence of the "Yankees" in demanding rights never before allowed, the necessity of maintaining the unity of the empire at all costs, and the wickedness and futility of any other than courteous remonstrance against the constituted authorities would form the theme of the speakers. The strength of the Whigs would be slightingly referred to and stress laid upon the imperative necessity for all sober minded people to guard property well, and other vested rights, which an appeal to arms would destroy. In the minds of many of the people there was no idea but that the act of the Ministry had done more than justly discipline those who boldly resisted proper and reasonable demands. There was another side to the argument, of course, among thoughtful New Yorkers who had read the utterances of James Otis and Samuel Adams with attention, who had heard echoes of the speeches in the Virginia House of Burgesses, or of the debates in Pennsylvania and other Colonies. The spirit of independence shown by their British ancestors was aroused in them for they failed to perceive how an Englishman over the Seas had a divine right to liberties denied to them. These arguments were, however, rarely, if ever, heard in the Tory Manor. Again, the luxury and wealth of New York, the close connection it had with the Crown, and the indifference to political changes which commerce and business often show, made the Province slow to adopt any measures to relieve the oppression of their Boston fellow citizens. Isaac Wilkins, the Westchester

Judge, and Samuel Seabury, the Westchester parson and schoolmaster, are typical representatives of those who upon conscientious grounds upheld King George and his Ministers.

Col. Robert Morris and his wife, the sweet-faced Mary Philipse who is said to have won the heart of Col. Washington some fifteen years before; Col. Beverly Robinson, Capt. Oliver de Lancey, and others would be frequent guests at the hospitable board of Col. Philipse. The controversy over public matters grew more and more intense. There was a sharp division between the "Sons of Liberty" and the "Tories," as the United Empire Loyalists were called, and a "Yankee" would therefore find it unpleasant to remain among those who cared more for Acts of Parliament than for the good of their country.

During his three years' residence in Philipse Manor. young Humphreys paid visits to his home and College, where his patriotic ardour was renewed and reinvigorated, In the Autumn of 1774 he was called to receive the degree of Master of Arts, which he did at the Annual Commencement. It was his duty to deliver the Master's Oration, which he pronounced in English. In the selection of his topic, "Taste," we see the influence which his stay at Philipse Manor had already exerted on him. This oration was received with much applause. In the following year as a recognition of his scholarship he was invited to become a Tutor in Yale, a position which, however, he declined.

The shot fired at Concord, that was heard around the world, the brave and sharp resistance to the British Regulars and their veteran General at Bunker's Hill by the hastily gathered Provincial troops, under three different Commanders, aroused the latent patriotism of many who had thought negotiation and petition would gain for the Colonies their just demands. It also widened the breach

between former friends and neighbours, and made a broad distinction between the Tories and the "Friends of Liberty." As the conflict of opinion changed to actual warfare, the attitude of the Province of New York to the Continental cause also assumed a new phase. Committees of Safety and Correspondence were appointed. The Assembly distinctly declared for Liberty and the Tories although thoroughly entrenched in the respect and affection of friends and tenants were made uncomfortable, and threatened with confiscation and pillage. The Lord of Philipse Manor, highly esteemed as he was, did not escape threats and even attempted violence. Consequently, the position of an open and avowed "Son of Liberty," as young Humphreys was, became in that family not only unpleasant but dangerous. While his personal relations with the members of the Philipse household were still cordial and friendly, and while he appreciated to the full the kindness received, he also perceived that his opinions and those of his host were incompatible.

Col. Philipse with his family was among those early proscribed when the Provincial Congress took charge of the affairs of New York. He went to England, where he died in 1785, and members of his family gained fame in the British army and civil life. His estates in America were confiscated. Before this evil day had come upon the Philipses the young tutor had conscientiously resigned his charge, and returned to his home in Derby. At the Parsonage there would be a warm greeting from his father and mother, there would be much talk over his experiences among the Loyalists, and as the whole family was thoroughly interested in the Continental cause, ardent wishes would be expressed for the success of the American arms. His brother John, who afterward was for many years town clerk of Derby, was then a member of the Committee of Inspection and also of a Committee for equipping troops

for the Army. His brother Elijah served in the Connecticut line, attaining the rank of Major, and is said to have had three horses shot under him.

As his brother Daniel had established a school in 1775 in New Haven for the better teaching of English Grammar, and other branches ordinarily neglected, it is possible that David became his assistant, until the loud call to arms sent him home as it did the best of the young men of Connecticut.

Connecticut had very early in the struggle taken a strong position in favour of freedom. In Jonathan Trumbull, the people had a Governor wise, patient, untiring, thoroughly imbued with the spirit of patriotism and willing and able to make sacrifices for his country. He was the trusted confidant of Washington and was affectionately called by him "Brother Jonathan." The twenty-five Militia regiments had for several years previous to 1776 been exercised in arms on the spring and fall "General training" days. The General Assembly had in 1774 remonstrated strongly against the Boston Port Bill. Public meetings were held everywhere at which addresses were made and resolutions of disapproval passed. When, in the beginning of September, 1774, it was rumoured that War Ships were approaching Boston to cannonade the town, in less than thirty hours the Militia were under arms, and for more than one hundred and seventy-five miles the roads were thronged with troops on their way to the defence of Boston. On September 15, 1774, there was a large and enthusiastic Convention held in Hartford, which heartily commended and approved the non-consumption agreement.[1]

Soon after, the phrase "Sons of Liberty" became common, and so was the practice of erecting liberty poles. A noted one was erected at East Haddam on the Con-

[1] *The American Revolution*, by R. E. Hinman, p. 20.

necticut River, where Nathan Hale first taught school, which was one hundred and forty-seven feet high and from which floated "a large union flag with the emblem of liberty neatly portrayed thereon, fighting the cause of America against Tyranny."

The story of the various flags used before the adoption of the present American Standard, is a curious and interesting chapter of our history. Col. Humphreys thus described one raised over Gen. Putnam's division of the Continental Army on Prospect Hill, Cambridge:

> On July 20, 1776; immediately after the reading of the Declaration upon the reason for taking up arms issued by the Continental Congress to the Continental Army:—As soon as these memorable words were pronounced to General Putnam's Division, which he had ordered to be paraded on Prospect Hill, they shouted in three Huzzaz a loud amen; Whereat (a cannon from the Fort being fired as a signal), the new Standard, lately sent from Connecticut (to Putnam's "Third" Regiment,) was suddenly seen to rise and unroll itself to the wind. On one side was inscribed in large letters of gold, "An Appeal to Heaven" and on the other were delineated the armorial bearings of Connecticut, which without supporters, or crest, consist unostentatiously of three lines with this motto, "Qui transtulit, sustinet"; alluding to the pious confidence our forefathers placed in the protection of Heaven, on those three allegorical Scions—Knowledge—Liberty—Religion, which they have been instrumental in transplanting to America.[1]

It was determined by the General Assembly that in April, 1775, one fourth of the Militia was to be raised for the defence of the Colony. After the Lexington alarm, six regiments were sent to Boston and Lake Champlain and the Assembly voted to purchase three thousand stand of arms, to issue fifty thousand pounds in bills of credit, and to lay a special tax of seven pence on the pound upon the

[1] Humphrey's *Life of Putnam*, Ed. of 1788, pp. 113, 114.

"Grand list." One of the brilliant exploits of the first months of actual hostilities was the capture of Ticonderoga, that strong fortress at the outlet of Lake George, which guarded the way to Canada. The glory of this exploit is usually given to Col. Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys. It was planned in Connecticut by Samuel Holden Parsons, Silas Deane, Samuel Bishop, William Williams, Thomas Munford, Titus Hosmer, and others, who pledged their individual credit with the Colonial Treasury to equip the small company which set out for the north by the way of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, where Col. John Brown, a classmate of David Humphreys, with some sturdy men, joined the force, and then all took their march for Bennington, where Ethan Allen and his daring companions were added. The demand for the surrender by the intrepid Vermonter has become classic: "I demand the fort, in the Name of the Great Jehovah, and the Continental Congress."

In the early summer of 1775, Gen. David Wooster with several regiments of the Connecticut Militia marched for New York and encamped above the city on Harlem Heights; his arrival was warmly welcomed by the authorities, and he was frequently entertained by the officers of the New York Military organization and given a public dinner by the City Military Club. His appointment by the Continental Congress and assignment to duty in the northern department, and the fact that no hostile demonstration was made against the City, led to the withdrawal of the troops in September.

In the same summer six additional regiments were authorized to be raised in different parts of the Colony for the Continental Army, which were dispatched to the American camps around Boston where Washington had lately arrived to take the general command.

The War of the Revolution had now opened with grim

determination and events followed rapidly. In March, 1776, the British abandoned Boston, to reappear at New York in the following July and August. Washington anticipated them by immediately transferring a portion of his army to that point.

No serious attempt had hitherto been made to fortify New York. The arrival in the Continental camp at Cambridge of an officer of such military renown and service in European wars as Gen. Charles Lee, and the defenceless condition of New York should the British evacuate Boston and attempt to take possession of the new base, brought about a discussion by the Commander-in-Chief and his generals, as to the best course to be pursued. Gen. Lee by his military knowledge and fluent speech had strongly impressed some with his ability and discretion. The conclusion of the discussion was that Gen. Lee was authorized to raise troops for the defence of New York in Rhode Island and Connecticut. He accordingly proceeded to Lebanon, the home of Gov. Trumbull, who gave him all the aid possible and assisted him in mobilizing the militia of Connecticut. Here, it must be noted, that though Gen. Lee was the commander of the expedition, the Connecticut troops looked to their officers for orders. Connecticut was always most jealous of her independence and never allowed outside officials to interfere with her State troops. The men that went to New York considered themselves subject to Gen. Lee only so far as it accorded with the judgment of their immediate superiors in rank.

The assertion of some writers that this plan of defending New York was only an ambitious one of Gen. Lee, who had been influenced by listening to the fiery and indiscreet oratory of Isaac Sears, New York's famous "Son of Liberty," is not borne out by facts.

Sears had been compelled to leave New York owing to

his wild and unfounded charges against all who did not agree with him in his violent tirades against Great Britain and schemes for obtaining the just liberties of the Colony. His reckless and indiscriminate accusations had even cast suspicion upon many who were loyal Americans and staunchly devoted to the Continental cause.

Forced to leave New York, Sears was at this period at the American camp at Cambridge. Nevertheless it is certain that Gen. Lee in his advocacy of fortifying New York looked at the matter solely from strategic reasons. The records show equally conclusively that there was nothing but an honest and straightforward intention on the part of the Connecticut authorities to aid in defending and securing New York. The New York Committees of Safety, induced, however, largely by their dislike and suspicion of Captain Sears, and the fear that the troops from another State would come into collision with the constituted authorities, sent a delegation to the State line at Greenwich with a polite request that the troops should not proceed any farther. This request was as courteously refused, and over the old Post Road, through the Westchester farms and villages, the Connecticut troops streamed, and on February 4, 1776, entered the city of New York. There was a conflict of emotion in the hearts of the citizens. A hostile fleet was in their harbour, and a body of troops on the outskirts of their city. But Lee persisted, and redoubts and fortifications were planned and partially executed under his orders. It was observed that even then he displayed an arrogance and contempt for authority, which bore for him afterwards much bitter fruit. He failed to gain the good will of the authorities and upon his appointment by Congress to the department of the South, he left the city on March 7th, without a single expression of regret by the citizens.

General Putnam having been appointed to the command

of New York arrived on April 4th, and made the "Captain Kennedy House," at No. 1 Broadway, his headquarters. His experiences in the old French and Indian wars, his bluff, hearty manners, made him acceptable to all, and he revived the spirit of those who had become thoroughly terrified.[1]

The City was put under strict military rule, and every precaution taken against any surprise by the enemy. Batteries were planted at various points on the North and East Rivers around the City water-front. Forts were built upon several elevations north of the town, along the general line of Grand Street, of which the most notable were those on Bayard's, Lispenard's, and Jones's Hills and one at the foot of what is now East Eighty-eighth Street commanding the Hell Gate passage. The Connecticut troops which Lee had taken down were soon joined by five battalions and all the Riflemen of the Continental Army from Boston, under Gen. William Heath, and later by Brigades under Gens. Spencer, Greene, and Sullivan. Thus all was in readiness for George Washington himself, who after his triumphal entry into Boston, and his brief visit to Governor Trumbull at Norwich, Connecticut, entered the City on April 13, 1776, and took up his abode, with Mrs. Washington and his suite, in the elegant Richmond Hill Mansion, which stood on the present line of Varick Street, a short distance above Canal. With the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief, there was greater activity in putting the City in a condition to resist the attack of the enemy. The defences planned by Gen. Lee and continued by Gen. Putnam were approved. The positions were well chosen and showed strategic ability, and, wherever necessary, were strengthened and provided with additional fortifications. The keen eye of Gen. Putnam saw that the small island in the harbour close to

[1] Humphreys' *Life of General Putnam*, pp. 115–19

Fort George on the Battery commanded the approach to the city by the British ships. Upon his representation he was commissioned to erect upon it batteries and breastworks. With a small force he went over to the island and fortified it. This was the first time that any one had seen the importance of Nutten or Governor's Island as a military post. Upon the lines laid, the present Fort Columbus was erected, and the island subsequently became a United States military station. Gen. Lee had called attention to the inadequacy of the water batteries, and the forts above the city, to repel any demonstration by sea. He strongly advised that a line of redoubts should be upon the heights of Brooklyn, and extend southward on the elevated ground to the harbour. While many of the troops were restive under enforced inaction and soon exhausted their amusements in the quarters or on "The Fields" or Commons, the present site of the City Hall, others were glad to be detailed under Gen. Greene and a competent engineer corps to cross the East River, and commence the proposed fortifications back of the village of Brooklyn, in front of which would presently be fought the historic battle of Long Island. That was so carefully planned and well constructed a line of forts and intrenchments that the enemy declined to storm them and we thus escaped a more serious defeat.

By the middle of August the two hostile armies were prepared for the opening of the new campaign of 1776 with all its victories for the enemy and depressing but fortunately not decisive defeats for the Americans. The British and Hessians, some twenty-eight thousand strong, with a powerful fleet to co-operate, were threateningly encamped on Staten Island, seven miles down the harbour, while Washington stood at bay to defend New York. The American force consisted of twenty-seven battalions, or "Regiments of Foot" as they were styled, each having a

maximum strength of six hundred and forty officers and men. Most of them came from the New England States. Connecticut had sent in proportion more than any other State. It had forwarded to New York six Continental Battalions, seven regiments of new levies, and twelve Militia Regiments. The Battalions were commanded by Col. Samuel Wyllys of Hartford, Charles Webb of Stamford, John Durkee of Bean Hill, near Norwich, Jedidiah Huntington, of Norwich, Andrew Ward, and John Tyler. The levies, which were regiments of volunteers, recruited from the State Militia and the people at large, had enlisted to serve for six months of operations from June to December of that year. They were commanded by prominent men in the State—Colonels Gold S. Silliman of Fairfield, Philip Burr Bradley of Ridgefield, William Douglas of Northford, Fisher Gay of Farmington, Samuel Selden of Hadlyme, John Chester of Wethersfield, and Comfort Sage of Middletown. The twelve regiments of the State Militia were under the command of General Oliver Wolcott, of Litchfield, who had lately returned from his seat in the Continental Congress, where he had signed the Declaration of Independence, to take the field in the present emergency. Washington's rolls of the period show a total of about twenty-eight thousand soldiers at New York; but the number of "effectives" appears to have been no more than twenty thousand.

Against this American army the British had been gathering at Staten Island. It had been difficult to recruit men in England for the "American war" as it was usually called across the water, and the English Government was compelled to levy upon the famous regiments which had garrisoned at Gibraltar, various points in England and Ireland, and had served in the West Indies, with some from Scotland whose courage had been tested in the "Seven Years War." The British Ministry had

also engaged a large body of troops from Hesse-Cassel in Germany. These under their commanding Generals, de Heister, Von Mirbach, Von Stirn, and Colonels Von Dunnop and Von Lossberg, consisted of about eight thousand troops divided into four brigades of three regiments each. The British regulars were commanded by Sir William Howe, with such able auxiliary commanders as Lieutenant-Generals Clinton, Percy, and Cornwallis, and Major-Generals Matthews, Robertson, Pigot, Grant, Jones, Vaughan, and Agnew, with Leslie, Cleveland Smith, and Erskine as effective brigadiers. The whole strength of the enemy in the beginning of August, 1776, was more than thirty-one thousand of which there were fit for duty more than twenty-four thousand men.

Washington waited for the British to strike the first blow. He had carefully posted his troops at points most favourable for the defence of his position. They were not veterans, but they were filled with a hatred of tyranny, and were determined to fight for their lives and liberties. With few exceptions his generals were untried in actual warfare. The blow was soon to come, and our young poet-warrior, whose thoughts had been turning to the field, found himself on the ground with his countrymen, to meet the issue.

CHAPTER V

Early Battles

Humphreys Visits the New York Camps—His First Known Letter, 1776—Poem to Washington—He Enters the Service as Volunteer Adjutant of Col. Thompson's Regiment—Adieu to Yale—His Fitness for Command—The Battle of Long Island—Surprise and Defeat of the Americans—Washington's Skilful Retreat—The First Torpedo Boat or "American Turtle"—Its Expedition Described by Humphreys—The Battle of the Kegs—Successful Landing of the British Forces in New York, September 15, 1776—Critical Situation of the American Army—Troops Withdrawn to Harlem Heights—Panic among American Troops—Endeavours of Washington and Putnam to Stay the Panic—Humphreys' Vivid Description of Same—The Discouraged Conditions of the Americans—Knowlton's Scouting Party—Washington Orders an Attack—Battle of Harlem Heights—Its Success—Death of Col. Knowlton and Major Leitch—Good Effect of the Victory on the American Troops as Described by Humphreys.

HUMPHREYS' poems glow with patriotic impulse. Much would the modern compiler of the anthology of that day give for a copy of one of his first efforts, especially as we now know that it was dedicated to Washington. Time at this late date unearths a letter from the ardent soldier to be, penned as this campaign was about to open, which despite its brevity has a precious value for his biographer. Written to Col. Samuel B. Webb, then recently appointed aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief, it tells of an early visit to the front at New York, his tenting with Captain William Hull, fellow-townsman and college-mate, his writing a poem he there composed in

half an hour; and his hopes of getting Washington's permission to dedicate it to him. This letter, now printed for the first time, is also given in facsimile on the opposite page:

Derby 8 July 76.

Dear Sir:—

As I was so unfortunate as not to see you, but for a moment, whilst I was in town, I must take the liberty to trouble you with a line, & to enclose a short piece of poetry, which I wrote when I was last in New York. The subject is a noble one & he must be a stupid fellow, who couldn't say one clever thing upon it—how I have succeeded you must determine, this may be said in its favour, or rather by way of excuse for its imperfections, that it contains the genuine effusions of an honest & grateful heart, & that it was the employment of only half an hour as Captn Hull can testify—but Sir I would not have you imagine that I have presumption enough to offer it to the great personage, whose illustrious actions it was design'd to celebrate—yet could I think it by any means worthy of him, & had I obtained his permission I should not hesitate to do it—but as affairs are circumstanced, unless I had been sufficiently acquainted with your prudence as well as friendship & candour, I certainly never should have trusted it in your hands—but I know that Col. Webb will do nothing to the prejudice of his friend, & accordingly I commit it with the more freedom to his care to make what use of it he pleases.

I expect in a few weeks, to be in New York. When I shall have an opportunity to tell you how much

I am your sincere friend & humble serv't

(Signed) David Humphreys.

To Col. Webb.[1]

It was probably upon this visit, from what he saw in New York, from the busy preparations for defence, from

[1] From the original MS. letter in possession of the author.

the eagerness of the troops to meet the enemy, as well as from the gravity of the situation and the anxiety of the leaders, that Humphreys determined to enter the service at an early opportunity. He told Col. Webb that he expected to be back in the City in a few weeks. He kept his engagement, not as a visitor but as a soldier. In "a few weeks" he was there as a comrade.

At this date the Second Connecticut militia regiment, to which the town of Derby contributed one or more companies, was commanded by Col. Jonathan Fitch of New Haven. Its Lieutenant-Colonel was Jabez Thompson, of Derby, who was something of a veteran, having seen hard service in the Northern Department in the previous year. As the Colonel was engaged in other military duties at home, the Lieutenant-Colonel led the regiment to New York at the urgent call of Washington and Governor Trumbull.[1]

The regiment was one of the twelve which were hurried to the front in the emergency under the command, as stated at the close of the previous chapter, of General Oliver Wolcott. They arrived and encamped within and around New York about the middle of August.

That young Humphreys, so lately returned from the Camps, should feel the inspiration of the hour, and, with Col. Thompson and his fellow-townsmen in the Second Militia, respond to this call of his State and his Country, we know from his own prompt action and the pen of his patriotic muse. He offered his services as a volunteer Adjutant of the Regiment.[2]

As such he accompanied the regiment to the field where the enemy was expected at any moment to make their

[1] Col. Fitch wrote from New Haven, August 13, 1776: "Col. Jabez Thompson has undertaken the command of the regiment at last & is now gone to New York."—Force's *American Archives*, Fifth Series.

[2] Humphreys so states in his *Life of Putnam*.

threatened formidable attack. His buoyant enthusiasm fired his poetic imagination and as he was leaving to join the army, he addressed the following sonnet to his college friends at New Haven with whom he had spent many companionable hours since his school teaching days:

Adieu, thou Yale, where youthful poets dwell,
No more I linger by thy classic stream
Inglorious ease and sportive songs farewell.
Thou startling clarion break the sleeper's dream.

And sing, ye bards; the war inspiring theme.
Hear ye the din of battle? Clang of arms?
Saw ye the steel mid starry banners beam?
Quick throbs my breast at war's untried alarms.

Unknown pulsations stirred by glory's charms
While dear Columbia calls, no danger awes,
Though certain death to threaten'd chains be join'd,
Though fails this flesh devote to freedom's cause,
Can death subdue th' unconquerable mind?
Or adamantine chains ethereal substance bind?[1]

Hardly a fortnight passed since Humphreys' arrival in Camp, before the enemy began their move against the City. They found it to their advantage to attack the Brooklyn lines first.

On the early morning of August 22d, after a night of thunder and lightning, and a storm whose fury was long remembered, and which did much damage, the British Commander sent over to Long Island in seventy-five flat-boats, eleven batteaux, and two galleys built for this service, under the protection of three frigates and two "bomb Ketches," a force of fifteen thousand regulars and Hessians, with forty pieces of artillery. The landing of the main army was made at Gravesend Bay. Sir Henry Clinton

[1] Humphreys' *Poetical Works*.

and Lord Cornwallis with an advance Corps of four thousand, consisting of a brigade of light infantry, and the Grenadier and foot reserves, were the first to be rowed in ten divisions to Gravesend, and landed near the present village of Bath. It is said that "the enemy themselves, a few Dutch farmers in the vicinity, and the pickets of Hand's Riflemen, were the only persons who witnessed this naval spectacle."[1]

As any attempt at opposition would have been unavailing the American pickets did not sound a general alarm, but notified their superior officers. The whole army was successfully landed before noon of the 22d, and immediately took up advantageous positions. Lord Cornwallis, with Dunnop's Chasseurs and Grenadiers and six field pieces, were to occupy the village of Flatbush, "but with orders not to attempt to pass beyond it, if he found it held by the rebels."

The remainder of the army encamped near the coast, from the Narrows to Flatbush. Cornwallis's march to Flatbush was uninterrupted except by a random shot from one of Col. Hand's riflemen; the main body of which kept close, however, to the enemy's front a part of the way, on the edge of the woods, without being observed, and reached the main American camp in safety.

As soon as the Commander-in-Chief knew of the landing, he sent reinforcements to Gen. Sullivan, then commanding on the Brooklyn front, numbering about eighteen hundred men. On the 23d, Washington visited the division on that side and issued an order to his army at large in which he announced the arrival of the British, and urged the troops to "remember you are freemen, fighting for the blessings of liberty, that slavery will be your portion and that of your posterity, if you do not acquit your-

[1] Johnston's *Campaign of 1776*, vol. iii.; *Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society, Brooklyn*, p. 141.

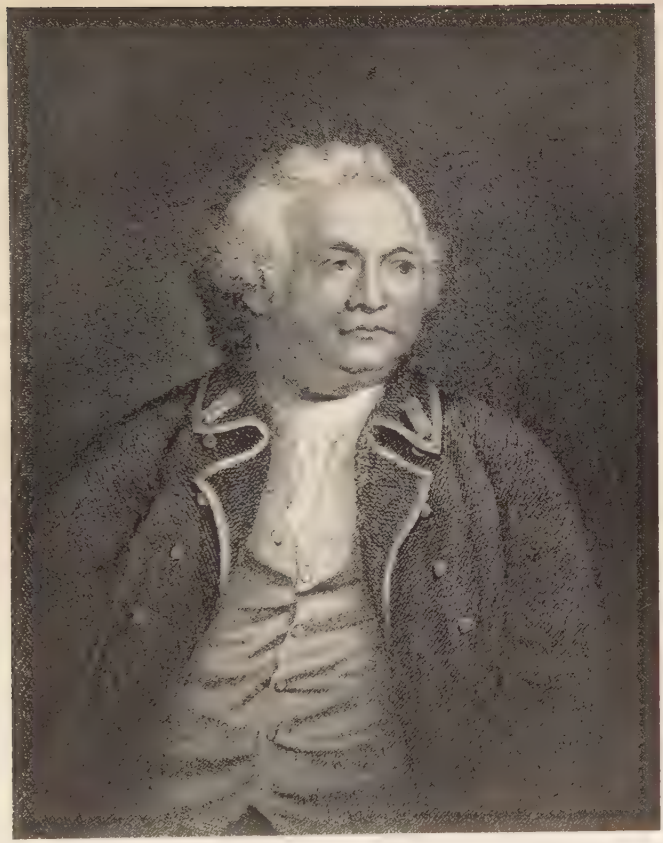
selves like men." On the following days there occurred some slight skirmishes—attempts to penetrate each other's lines by small parties—but no advantage was gained. Gen. Greene, under whose supervision the works had been constructed on the Brooklyn front, unfortunately fell ill at this critical juncture and General Sullivan succeeded him in command. Sullivan in turn was presently superseded by Gen. Putnam, whom Washington considered better fitted to lead men into action. Putnam was instructed to take every precaution and strengthen his outguards, for, said the Commander-in-Chief, "When the attack does come, it will be sudden and violent."

To break the force of this coming attack a heavy picket line of three thousand men was sent out about a mile beyond the works to the line of low hills which ran irregularly from Greenwood Cemetery near the harbour easterly toward Jamaica. Three roads or passes cut through these hills and each was strongly guarded. Early on the morning of the 27th the blow fell. The British advanced with strong columns into the passes at the Cemetery and Prospect Park, while a third column larger than either and headed by Sir William Howe himself executed a flank movement by way of Jamaica pass, which on account of its distance, the Americans had not effectually guarded. This movement proved fatal to the Americans. While the latter were manfully holding their own at the other two passes, Howe swept down on their flank and rear. Realizing that their retreat back to their lines was or would quickly be cut off, they were thrown into more or less confusion, and breaking up into small parties turned to run and fight to camp. Sharp and desperate skirmishes took place on the way, principally in the vicinity of the Park, where General Sullivan was commanding, and at the Cemetery on whose slopes Generals Lord Sterling and Parsons were making the best resistance of the day.

Sterling was completely cut off, but his men fought with wonderful courage until overcome by numbers. A little more than half of the American picket force succeeded in getting back to their lines where Washington from one of the forts had been watching their movements and discomfiture without the ability to assist them. The superior force of the enemy and the impossibility of holding so long an outer line, as was attempted, caused the disaster of the day to the Americans. The latter suffered a loss of about nine hundred prisoners, and the enemy's loss was approximately the same. Among our officers, Lord Sterling and General Sullivan were captured, and a few days later General Nathaniel Woodhull, a patriot of Long Island, who subsequently died of brutal wounds inflicted upon him when about to surrender.

To Washington the day's results were a bitter disappointment, but he rose to the occasion, replaced his losses, and for two days and nights kept up a fire on the enemy as they drew nearer to his entrenched position. Then he executed one of those retrograde movements which on several occasions, during the war, extorted the admiration of friends and foes alike. He ordered a retreat—his "famous retreat"—from Long Island, which was safely accomplished across the East River under the cover of profound darkness, rain, and fog, on the night of August 29th. On the following morning his weary and disheartened Brooklyn division—about eight thousand strong after the battle—was once more encamped on safer ground at New York. It was a timely and skilful escape from a dangerous situation.

Humphreys in his interesting *Life of General Putnam* briefly comments on this severe defeat:—"General Putnam was within the lines, when the engagement took place on the 27th, between the British army and our Corps, in which we lost about a thousand men killed and missing,



Israel Putnam

with the Generals Sullivan and Lord Sterling made prisoners. But our men (though attacked on all sides) fought with great bravery and the enemy's loss was not light." Further along he adds, with military terseness and precision: "The unfortunate battle of Long-Island, the masterly retreat from thence and the actual passage of part of the hostile fleet in the East River above the Town, preclude the evacuation of New-York."

Our Adjutant does not appear to have participated in these eventful movements. In his Life of Putnam he rarely mentions or expressly includes himself. It is only when a description is particularly graphic and bears the traces of being written by an eye-witness that we can safely assume that Humphreys was present in the actions he describes. Judged by this criterion we must conclude that at this time he was on duty on the New York side. It is to be noted, furthermore, that none of General Wolcott's militia regiments were ordered over to Long Island. It would have been questionable generalship to permit those inexperienced, undisciplined, and poorly armed troops to attempt to defend a responsible and exposed position. They remained at New York, where the orders of the week required every officer and man to be in camp subject to immediate call. Humphreys was undoubtedly at his post with the second regiment. In a fortnight's time he was himself to experience a day as exciting as August 27th.

When the last soldier had been safely landed from Long Island the various brigades were assigned to the most available positions for the defence of New York City from the attack which would soon be made both by sea and land. Brigades from Connecticut, New York and Massachusetts, under the general oversight of Gen. Putnam, guarded the East River as far as Fiftieth Street; those of Gen. Spencer, Horn's Hook and Harlem; while Gen.

Heath with two brigades kept watch over Kingsbridge and the Westchester shore.

While the troops were confident that the British would not long delay their descent upon the city they were not at first depressed and performed cheerfully their dreary guard duty.

The situation of the army was, however, very critical. A large number of loyalists were resident in New York, and the loss of the Long Island defences made certain the loss of New York as the British could command the city with their guns on Brooklyn Heights. Several thoughtful patriots counselled Washington to burn and abandon the city, among them Gen. Greene and John Jay. This advice was largely the result of a disinclination to turn over such a well-provided and convenient capital to the enemy, as a base for their future operations.

At a council of war held on September 9th, it was determined to withdraw the main body of troops from the city and concentrate the army in the neighbourhood of Harlem and on its Heights. Five thousand men were to be left to hold the various forts and entrenchments in the city and on the East River until all the military stores could be moved out. Humphreys was with this body of troops. In the reorganization of the Army on August 31st, Col. Gold S. Silliman, of Fairfield, Connecticut, who had been through the Long Island operations, was put in command of a brigade of which Col. Thompson's Second Regiment, lately under Wolcott, was a part. It was posted in the city, where most of its men had been encamped since their arrival. Their parade ground was the present City Hall Park. Here they remained in constant expectation that the enemy would cross the East River to capture the city, and they realized their precarious situation. As Putnam had the general command of that section of the Island, and still maintained his headquarters

on lower Broadway, his presence probably tended to keep up the confidence and courage of the militiamen. In two weeks the enemy made their second move, and Putnam's division had to meet the brunt of it. Adjutant Humphreys, as we shall see, bore his share, barely escaping capture as a prisoner after a day of strenuous exertion.

On the early morning of Sunday, September 15th, after the *Rose*, *Roebuck*, *Orpheus*, *Phœnix*, and *Carysfort*, British war vessels, had been assembling in Wallabout Bay for ten days and gathering the troops, eighty-four boats containing the advance division with Col. Donnop's grenadiers and Yagers, under the command of Sir Henry Clinton and Lord Cornwallis, and protected by the guns of the frigates, drew up in line to cross to New York, three miles above the city. "They looked," said a soldier at Kip's Bay, "like a large clover field in full bloom." At the same time a constant and deadly cannonade commenced from the batteries of the five war-ships. Col. Douglas, who was in command at Kip's Bay, near the foot of East Thirty-fourth Street, found it impossible to return the fire with any effect. "It came like a peal of thunder and the militiamen could do nothing but keep well under cover. The guns sent such a deadly fire that no resistance could be made."[1]

Finally the order was given to retreat. This was done without any regularity or conduct by any superior officer. The entrenchments were abandoned and the soldiers sought safety in the upper part of the Island, hurrying along the road from the Bay to the Boston Post Road. The British soon after landed at Kip's Bay and went in pursuit of the panic-stricken men. Near the present Forty-

[1] Prof. Henry P. Johnston's *Campaign of 1776*, p. 232. All accounts agree that it was impossible to remain under the fire of the battleships. See the statements of Major Nicholas Fish, Colonels Gold S. Silliman and Wm. Douglas, as given in Johnston's *Campaign*.

first Street there was a cross-road connecting the Bloomingdale Road and the Post Road. Upon the hill known then as "Inclenberg Heights" was the residence of Mr. Robert Murray and his hospitable and patriotic wife, Mary Lindley Murray. This house stood near the present corner of Thirty-sixth Street and Fourth (or Park) Avenue. Upon the south side of the cross-road was a large cornfield belonging to Mr. Murray. As soon as Washington learned of the landing and of the panic among the troops, he with several members of his staff proceeded rapidly down the Island from his new headquarters on Harlem Heights, and took up his position on the rising ground near the corner of the present Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street. Putnam also rode up hot haste from the city to note the situation. Washington saw the frightened militia of Fellows's Brigade coming by the Post Road and the enemy in pursuit, also Parsons's Brigade in disorder advancing by the Bloomingdale Road. He directed them in person to form along the line of the Post Road; "Take the walls; take the cornfield," he shouted, and Parsons's men quickly ran to the wall and field but in a confused and disordered manner. Their General did his best to get them into line on the ground but found it impossible, they were so dispersed, and, moreover, they were now beginning to retreat. The panic which had seized the Connecticut militia was communicated to Fellows's Massachusetts men who were also militia, and now it was to sweep up Parsons's Continentals including Prescott's men of Bunker Hill. To Washington all this confusion and rout seemed wholly unnecessary and unreasonable and dashing in among the flying crowds he endeavoured to convince them that there was no danger, and used his utmost exertions to bring them into some order. He was roused to more than indignation at the sight, and in his letter to Congress on the following

day denounced the conduct of these troops as "disgraceful and dastardly." Putnam, Parsons, Fellows, and others were equally active in attempting to stop the flight, but it was to no purpose. "The very demon of fear and disorder," says Martin, "seemed to take full possession of all and everything on that day." Nothing remained but to continue the retreat by the Bloomingdale Road, now upper Broadway, to Harlem Heights.[1]

By these movements around Kip's Bay and Murray Hill, the safety of Silliman's brigade and the artillery in the city, three miles below, was seriously threatened. Hearing of the enemy's landing, Silliman marched his men from the "Fields" to the American fortified position along the line of Grand Street, running east and west, and took post at Fort "Bunker Hill," as it was called, erected on an elevation on Mr. Bayard's grounds, west of the Bowery. The two or three artillery companies in the city joined him there. As Gen. Putnam was dashing to various points to call in the scattered guards, one of his aides, Major Aaron Burr,[2] rode up to "Bunker Hill" fort and informed Silliman that his only chance of escape lay in an immediate and rapid march across to the west side of the Island and then by way of lanes and paths along the North River to Harlem Heights. Silliman started at once, for time was precious, and succeeded in escaping by a narrow margin. Putnam joined the retreating brigade and conducted it through the woods and against alarms with something of his old Indian-war stealth, dash, and intrepidity.

Let Humphreys tell us of the day's experiences, for he was present with his regiment and a valuable eye-witness. It is the best and most graphic picture of the scene that we have:

[1] Prof. Johnston's *Campaign of 1776*, p. 235.

[2] Gen. Putnam's two aides at this time were his son Major Daniel Putnam and Major Burr.

On Sunday, the fifteenth, the British after sending three ships of war up the North River to Bloomingdale and keeping up, for some hours, a severe cannonade on our lines, from those already in the East River, landed in force at Turtle (Kip's) Bay—our new Levies commanded by a state Brigadier General, fled without making resistance. Two Brigades of General Putnam's Division, ordered to their support, notwithstanding the exertions of their Brigadiers, and of the Commander-in-Chief himself, who came up at the instant conducted themselves in the same shameful manner. His Excellency then ordered the Heights of Harlem, a strong position, to be occupied. Thither the forces in the vicinity, as well as the fugitives, repaired. In the meantime Gen. Putnam, with the remainder of his command and the ordinary outposts, was in the city. After having caused the Brigades to begin their retreat by the route of Bloomingdale, in order to avoid the enemy, who were then in possession of the main road leading to Kingsbridge, he galloped to call off the pickets and guards. Having myself been a Volunteer in his division and acting Adjutant to the last Regiment that left the city, I had frequent opportunities that day of beholding him, for the purpose of issuing orders and encouraging the troops, flying, on his horse covered with foam, wherever his presence was most necessary. Without his extraordinary exertions the guards must have been inevitably lost, and it is probable the entire Corps would have been cut in pieces. When we were not far from Bloomingdale, an Aid de Camp came from him at full speed to inform, that a column of British infantry was descending upon our right. Our rear was soon fired upon, and the Colonel of our regiment, (Col. Thompson), (whose order was just communicated for the front to file off to the left) was killed on the spot. With no other loss, we joined the army, after dark, on the Heights of Harlem.

Before our Brigades came in, we were given up for lost by our friends. So critical indeed was our situation and so narrow the gap by which we escaped, that the instant we had passed, the enemy closed in by extending their line from river to river. Our men, who had been fifteen hours under arms,

harrassed by marching and countermarching in consequence of incessant alarms, exhausted as they were by heat and thirst (for the day proved insupportably hot and few or none had canteens insomuch that some died at the brooks where they drank) if attacked, could have made but feeble resistance.[1]

Hezekiah Packard, a Connecticut soldier, has left us in his *Reminiscences* a vivid picture of that day. He says:

Soon after this our troops left Long Island, and we were ordered to evacuate New York. It was a Sabbath in the last part of August or first of September. The heat was extreme, the roads were crowded with troops, with men, women and children, cattle, goods and chattels, all overspread with thick clouds of dust. The retreat was precipitate and confused. Many were injured by drinking cold water. One died near the well where he drank. It was a day of alarm and confusion, perplexity and fatigue, more noticeable as it was the Sabbath. The night following was dark and rainy. I slept on the ground under a blanket, with my captain, who always treated me as a son.

The disaster of the day would have been greater had the British generals and their staff been actively in the field with their Commands. It is said that when Sir William Howe with his staff and Governor Tryon approached Inclenberg Heights, Mrs. Murray, whose husband was absent, cordially invited them to alight and take some refreshments. They gladly accepted the invitation and spent agreeably two hours in that stately and hospitable house charmed by the conversation of its accomplished mistress and gratified with the wines and dainties set before them.[2] So runs the pretty legend.

[1] Humphreys' *Life of General Putnam*, edition of 1788, pp. 131–133.

[2] See *Oration by the Hon. John Jay in Commemoration of the Battle of Harlem Plains, on its One Hundredth Anniversary*, by the New York State Historical Society, p. 19. Issued by the Society, New York, MDCCCLXVI.

In this interval Putnam's men pushed on and reached their encampment without serious loss.

That night [adds Humphreys], our soldiers excessively fatigued by the sultry march of the day, their cloaths wet by a severe shower of rain that succeeded towards the evening, their blood chilled by the cold wind that produced a sudden change in the temperature of the air, and their hearts sunk within them by the loss of baggage, artillery, and works in which they had been taught to put great confidence, lay upon their arms, covered only by clouds of an uncomfortable sky. To retrieve our disordered affairs and prevent the enemy from profiting by them, no exertion was relaxed, no vigilance remitted on the part of our higher officers. The Regiments which had been least exposed to fatigue that day, furnished the necessary picquets to secure the army from surprise. Those, whose military lives had been short and unpracticed, felt enough besides lassitude of body to disquiet the tranquillity of their repose. Nor had those, who were older in service and of more experience, any subject for consolation. The warmth of enthusiasm seemed to be extinguished. The force of discipline had not sufficiently occupied its place to give men a dependence upon each other.[1]

On the following day, Monday the 16th, a party of over one hundred rangers under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Knowlton of Connecticut was sent out before daybreak to learn the exact location of the British advance guard. After passing over the ridge known as Bloomingdale Heights, and at that time as Vanderwater Heights,[2] they encountered near its southern limit a large body composed of the British Light Infantry, the Forty-second Highlanders, and the German "Yagers." A brief but

[1] Humphreys' *Life of Gen. Putnam*, pp. 124, 125.

[2] Columbia University, St. Luke's Hospital, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine occupy a portion of the ground. The Heights are now Morningside Heights.

brisk encounter ensued. The Colonel, perceiving that the British were pressing heavily upon his flank, ordered a retreat. At the northern end of the ridge, the American troops re-formed. In the meantime the heavy firing had attracted the attention of Washington. Reports of the skirmish were brought to him, and he at once rode down to the outposts, where he saw that there was an opportunity for a victory over the enemy. He ordered Col. Knowlton to advance against the three hundred troops concealed in the woods, sending to his aid Major Leitch, with three companies of Col. Weedon's Virginians, and attack them in the rear. A feint of an attack was to be made in front, thus diverting the main body of the enemy, who "immediately ran down the hill to the round meadow at its foot." Here they were met by a determined force and quickly compelled "to retreat to a clear field, about two hundred paces, (eight hundred feet distant) where they lodged themselves behind a fence covered with bushes." While a continuous firing was kept up by the American troops, under which the British began to give way, it was not until two field pieces were levelled upon them that they once more retreated up the eastern slope of the hill. It was then that Col. Knowlton and Major Leitch with their commands came upon the enemy's flank. They appear to have mistaken the latter's position and attacked too soon, but the men climbed the rocks, and gave battle. Early in the engagement Major Leitch was mortally wounded and a little later Knowlton fell. The junction of the Forty-second Highlanders with the exhausted Light Infantry enabled the British, after a brisk conflict, to make their stand in a buckweat field, about opposite Columbia University, where the battle raged fiercely. After a two hours' contest, American reinforcements having arrived, the British again retreated. Our men were encouraged by the presence, and the brave, cheering words and deeds of

Gen. Putnam, Gen. Greene, Adjutant-General Joseph Reed, Colonel Tilghman, and others of Washington's staff. The British were driven from the buckwheat field to an orchard. From this vantage ground they were soon forced, and after vainly attempting a further stand they were "driven across a hollow, and up a hill not far distant from their own encampment," now known to be on the line of Broadway, south of 107th Street.[1]

It was at this juncture, when the British had been driven back, that Washington, desiring to retain the advantage already gained, withdrew his troops from the field. He was also aware that large reinforcements for the enemy were on the march, which would involve a general engagement, which was the one thing he wished to avoid at that time. General George Clinton says of this battle, "It has animated our troops, gave them new spirit, and erased every bad impression the retreat from Long Island etc., had left on their minds; they find they are able with inferior Numbers to drive their Enemy, and think of nothing now but conquest."[2]

Humphreys was a witness of the affair, and has thus concisely described it in his Life of Putnam:

> Next morning several parties of the enemy appeared upon the plains in our front. On receiving this intelligence, General Washington rode quickly to the out-posts, for the purpose of preparing against an attack, if the enemy should advance with that design.
>
> Lieutenant Colonel Knowlton's Rangers (a fine selection from the eastern Regiments), who had been skirmishing with an advance party, came in and informed the General, that a body of British were under cover of a small eminence at no

[1] H. P. Johnston's *Battle of Harlem Heights*.

[2] MS. Letter of Gen. George Clinton to the New York Convention in New York Historical Society MSS. Inserted in *Commemoration of the Battle of Harlem Plains*, p. 52.

considerable distance. His Excellency, willing to raise our men from their dejection by the splendor of some little success, ordered Lieutenant Colonel Knowlton, with his Rangers, and Major Leitch with three Companies of Weeden's Regiment of Virginians to gain their rear; while appearances should be made of an attack in front. As soon as the enemy saw the party sent to decoy them, they ran precipitately down the hill, took possession of some fences and bushes, and commenced a brisk firing at long shot.

Unfortunately Knowlton and Leitch made their onset rather in flank than in rear. The enemy changed their front, and the skirmish at once became close and warm. Major Leitch having received three balls through his side, was soon borne from the field,[1] and Colonel Knowlton, (who had distinguished himself gallantly at the Battle of Bunker-Hill) was mortally wounded soon after. Their men, however, undaunted by these disasters, stimulated by the thirst of revenge for the loss of their leaders, and conscious of acting under the eye of the Commander-in-Chief, maintained the conflict with uncommon spirit and perseverance. But the General, seeing them in need of support, advanced part of the Maryland Regiments of Griffith and Richardson, together with some detachments from the eastern Corps as chanced to be contiguous to the place of action. Our troops this day, without exception, behaved with the greatest intrepidity. So bravely did they repulse the British, that Sir William Howe moved his *Reserve* with two field pieces, a battalion of Hessian Grenadiers, and a Company of Chasseurs to succour his retreating troops.

General Washington, not willing to draw on a general action declined pressing the pursuit. In this engagement were the second and third Battalions of Light Infantry, and the forty-second British regiment, and the German Chasseurs, of whom eight officers, and upwards of seventy privates were wounded, and our people buried nearly twenty who were left dead on the field. We had about forty wounded, our loss in

[1] Major Leitch after languishing some days died of lockjaw, and Colonel Knowlton died as the battle closed.

killed, except of two valuable officers, was very inconsiderable. An advantage, so trivial in itself, produced, in event, a surprising and almost incredible effect upon the whole army. Among the troops not engaged, who during the action were throwing earth from the new trenches, with an alacrity that indicated a determination to defend them, every visage was seen to brighten, and to assume, instead of the gloom of dispair, the glow of animation. This change, not less sudden than happy, left little room to doubt that the men, who ran the day before at the sight of the enemy, would now, (to wipe away the stain of that disgrace, and to recover the confidence of their General), have conducted themselves in a very different manner.[1]

The position which Silliman's brigade, including Humphreys' regiment, occupied during this affair is known to have been on the American line of works thrown up across the Heights at about 147th Street, just below which, near the centre, Alexander Hamilton subsequently erected his mansion called "Hamilton Grange." Colonel Silliman briefly confirms Humphreys' reference to the work on the trenches while the battle was going on half a mile in front. When the fighting began, says the Colonel,

our brigades where I am were immediately ordered under arms, but as the enemy did not then advance we grounded our arms and took spades and shovels and went to work and before night had thrown up lines across the Island . . . where before there was nothing but three little redoubts.[2]

[1] In addition to Humphreys' account the authorities upon the Battle of Harlem Heights are, the Hon. John Jay's *Commemorative Address* with its appendix of "Contemporary Accounts," and *The Battle of Harlem Heights, September 16, 1776, with a view of the events of the Campaign*, by Henry P. Johnston, A.M. The latter has shown that the engagement occurred in the vicinity of General Grant's tomb on Riverside Drive and west of Columbia University, instead of east as previously supposed. Barnard College stands directly on the path of the fighting.

[2] Johnston's *Campaign around New York*, p. 55 of Documents.

An episode of this Campaign which Humphreys particularly notices was the attempt to blow up a British War Ship in the Harbour by means of a newly contrived submarine torpedo craft. It occurred about September 6th while he was still encamped in the City. From the fulness of the details, and the vividness of the description, we must assume that he was an eye-witness of the enterprise so far as it could be viewed from the Battery at New York. To quote from his Life of Putnam:

It was the latter end of June when the British fleet, which had been at Halifax waiting for reinforcements from Europe, began to arrive at New-York. To obstruct its passage some marine preparations had been made. General Putnam to whom the directions of the whale boats, fire rafts, flat bottomed boats and armed vessels was committed, afforded his patronage to a project for destroying the enemy's shipping by explosion. A *Machine*, altogether different from anything hitherto devised by the art of man, had been invented by Mr. David Bushnell, for *submarine navigation*, which was found to answer the purpose perfectly of rowing horizontally at any given depth under water, and of rising or sinking at pleasure. To *this Magazine* (called the American Turtle) was attached *a Magazine of Powder*, which it was intended to be fastened under the bottom of a ship with a driving screw; in such sort that the same stroke which disengaged it from the Machine should put the internal clock-work in motion. This being done, the ordinary operation of a gun-lock (at the distance of half an hour, an hour, or any determinate time) would cause the powder to explode and leave the effects to the common laws of nature. The simplicity, yet combination discovered in the mechanism of this wonderful machine, were acknowledged by those skilled in Physicks, and particularly Hydraulics, to be not less ingenious than novel. The Inventor whose constitution was too feeble to permit him to perform the labour of rowing the Turtle, had taught his brother to manage it with perfect dexterity; but unfortunately his brother fell sick of a fever

just before the arrival of the fleet. Recourse was therefore had to a Sergeant in the Connecticut troops; who, having received whatever instruction could be communicated to him in a short time, went (too late in the night) with all the apparatus under the bottom of the Eagle a sixty-four gun ship on board of which the British Admiral, Lord Howe, commanded. In coming up, the screw, that had been calculated to perforate the copper sheathing, unluckily struck against some iron plates, where the rudder is connected with the stern. This accident, added to the strength of tide which prevailed and the want of adequate skill in the Sergeant, occasioned such delay that the dawn of day began to appear; whereupon he abandoned the Magazine to chance, and (after gaining proper distance) for the sake of expedition, rowed on the surface towards the town. General Putnam, who had been on the wharf anxiously expecting the result from the first glimmering of light, beheld the machine near Governor's Island and sent a whaleboat to bring it on shore. In about twenty minutes afterwards the Magazine exploded and blew a vast column of water to an amazing height in the air. As the whole business had been kept an inviolable secret, he was not a little diverted with the various conjectures, whether this stupendous noise was produced by a bomb, a meteor, a water-spout or an earthquake. Other operations of the most serious nature rapidly succeeded and prevented a repetition of the experiment.

This account is written with such spirit that we can readily recognize the sympathy our young Captain had for the inventor, who was also from Connecticut, and a fellow Yale man, and we can almost see him as he may have stood beside his General on the East River Wharf before dawn on that summer morning waiting for the report that should signalize the destruction of the *Eagle*.[1]

[1] The Sergeant who manipulated the "Turtle" on this occasion was Ezra Lee, of Lyme, Connecticut, and from him in after life Humphreys secured a full account of the night's adventure. Another account of the affair appears in the *American Journal of Science*, Vol. II., p. 94 (1820), at the close

Humphreys subjoins the following note respecting his countryman:

David Bushnell, A.M. of Saybrook in Connecticut, invented several other machines for the annoyance of shipping; these from accidents, not militating against the philosophical principles, on which their success depended, only partially succeeded. He destroyed a vessel in the charge of Commodore Symmonds, whose report to the Admiral was published. One of his kegs also demolished a vessel near the Long Island shore. About Christmas 1777 he committed to the Delaware a number of kegs, destined to fall among the British fleet at Philadelphia; but his squadron of Kegs, having been separated and retarded by the ice, demolished but a single boat. This catastrophe, however, produced an alarm, unprecedented in its nature and degree; which has been so happily described in the subsequent Song by the Hon. Francis Hopkinson, that the event it celebrates will not be forgotten so long as mankind shall continue to be delighted with works of humour and taste:

The Battle of the Kegs; a Song,—Tune, Moggy Lawder.

Gallants, attend, and hear a friend
  Trill forth harmonious ditty;
Strange things I'll tell, which late befell,
  In Philadelphia city.

'Twas early day, as poets say,
  Just when the sun was rising,
A soldier stood on log of wood,
  And saw a sight surprising.

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of which Lee says: "Gen. Putnam, with many other officers, stood on the shore spectators of this explosion." Humphreys was possibly one of the spectators. This episode is treated elaborately and scientifically by the late General Abbot, U. S. Engineer Corps, in his pamphlet *The Beginning of Modern Submarine Warfare.*

As in a maze he stood to gaze
The truth can't be denied, Sir,
He spied a score of Kegs or more,
Come floating down the tide, Sir.

A sailor, too, in jerkin blue,
The strange appearance viewing,
First damn'd his eyes, in great surprise,
Then said—"Some mischief's Brewing."

and so on for eighteen more verses.

CHAPTER VI

Early Battles (*Continued*)

Impossibility of Holding the Island of Manhattan—Or Even Fort Washington—Eagerness of Militia to Return to their Homes—Humphreys' Term for 1776 Expires—Anxiety of Washington—Condition of Affairs Criticized by Humphreys—Landing of British at Throgg's Neck—Heath Sent to Oppose them—Lord Howe Encamps at New Rochelle—Evacuation of New York Determined upon—Fort Lee Garrisoned—Washington Makes his Headquarters at White Plains—Capture of Chatterton Hill by British—Battle of White Plains—Howe's Strange Inactivity—Probable Reasons for it—American Camp Removed to North Castle—And thence to New Jersey—Humphreys' Narrative of this Period—Camp at Peekskill—Fortification of the Highlands and West Point—Heath Placed in Command of the Highlands—Sixth Connecticut Infantry Regiment—Humphreys Appointed Brigade Major—To General Parsons—Tryon's Expedition against Danbury—Attack on the British—Death of Gen. Wooster—Col. Meigs's Counter Expedition to Sag Harbour—Its Success—Humphreys Sent to Washington with an Account of the Expedition.—Washington's Return of Thanks—Washington's Camp at Middlebrook—Inexplicable Conduct of Lord Howe—Dilatoriness of British—Precautions Taken by Washington.

THE great advantage of the success at Harlem Heights was the confidence it gave to the American troops. It showed them that the British veterans were not invincible. From a strategic point of view, however, it was not of much consequence. Not only was it impossible to hold New York City, but even the fortifications on the Heights above Harlem, including Fort Washington, were untenable.

The earthworks had been erected with the hope of their being able to prevent the passage of the enemy's ships, and thus guard the Hudson, but to hold them for some time would require a large body of troops. Later it was found that even the ships could not be stopped. In the true sense of the word Fort Washington was no fortress. It had no barracks, fuel, water, or casemates. It was merely an extended open earthwork, and when Lord Howe was ready to attack it a few weeks later, its capture proved an easy matter.

It was at this period that General Washington and such keen-sighted patriots as Humphreys were depressed by anxiety as to how to maintain the strength of the Continental Army; the term of enlistment of many of the troops was expiring, and the militia from Connecticut and other States were all eager to return to their homes. "We are now," he writes, late in September, "as it were upon the eve of the dissolution of the army."

Colonel Humphreys says of this crisis:

> We were apparently about to reap the bitter fruit of that jealous policy which some leading men (with the best motives) had sown in our federal councils, when they caused the mode to be adopted for carrying on the war by detachments of militia from apprehension that an established Continental army after defending the country against foreign invasion might subvert its liberties themselves. Paradoxical as it will appear, it may be profitable to be known to posterity, that while our very existence as an independent people was in question the patriotic jealousy for the safety of our future *freedom* had been carried to such a virtuous but dangerous excess, as well nigh to preclude the attainment of our independence.[1]

Among the first to return home was the militia force brought down a month before by General Wolcott. Not

[1] Humphreys' *Life of Putnam*, p. 137.

engaged for any definite term and miserably equipped for hard campaigning they had become restless and more or less demoralized. Many of the men had left camp without leave, and many were on the sick list. Some of the regiments could report but fifty men for duty. The Second Battalion, to which Humphreys belonged, had no field officers present. Washington wrote to Governor Trumbull that the force was reduced to "almost nothing" and he accordingly discharged them all on September 24, 1776, and another body under General Saltonstall, of New London, took their place.

As no further record of his personal service in this campaign can be discovered we infer that Adjutant Humphreys returned home with his regiment. He was no doubt disgusted with the conduct of the militia, as Governor Trumbull and other Connecticut leaders were, but as the terms of nearly all the regiments in Washington's Army would expire by the end of the year, he could reconcile himself to the brief hiatus in his own service and look forward expectantly to the re-enlistment and reorganization of the Continental forces, which was bound to come, for a new opportunity to take the field. We shall presently hear from him again, a patriot and soldier, determined to stand by the cause to the very end of the struggle.

In the meantime the Campaign went on, and Humphreys continues to describe or allude to its events in his *Life of Putnam.*

About a month after his capture of New York, or on October 12th, Howe made his third advance on Washington by attempting to outflank him in Westchester County beyond the Harlem and the Bronx. Earl Percy was left at New York with two brigades, and the main part of the British Army, in ninety flat boats, was sent through Hell Gate into Long Island Sound and landed at Throgg's Neck.

Other troops including the Hessians, under Gen. Knyphausen from Montressor's Island and Flushing, landed at Myer's Point near New Rochelle on October 22d.

To oppose them Washington sent Gen. Heath with a strong force to occupy the lower part of Westchester County. Several skirmishes occurred between the Americans who had made redoubts, thrown up entrenchments near Williams' Bridge, and were guarding the passes to King's Bridge, and the causeways to Throgg's and Pell's Neck. After a spirited skirmish with Gen. Glover's brigade on his way to New Rochelle, Lord Howe encamped upon the high ground between Hutchinson's River and New Rochelle on the road to White Plains. At a council of war held at the headquarters of Gen. Washington, the Col. Robert Morris House, better known as the "Madame Jumel Mansion," it was decided to abandon Harlem Heights and concentrate the army in Westchester. The four divisions under Generals Lee, Heath, Sullivan, and Lincoln crossed the Harlem River and encamped in entrenchments extending from the heights of Fordham to White Plains, a distance of nearly thirteen miles. Gen. Greene with a small force garrisoned Fort Lee on the New Jersey side nearly opposite Fort Washington. When the army had been concentrated and encamped Washington anxiously awaited the movements of Lord Howe, who with his disciplined and completely equipped soldiers had marched toward Scarsdale. The American Camp was well entrenched, and Chatterton Hill, an eminence on the ridge of the western side of the Bronx, which commanded a large portion of the surrounding country, could be held with good troops.

On the morning of October 28th, as Gen. Washington, Gen. Lee, and several members of his staff were making a reconnaissance, to determine what other points needed defending, an aide brought him word that the British were

approaching. With a courteous "Gentlemen, there is other work for us," he immediately galloped to the Camp, and put the army in proper position to resist the onset, while Col. Haslett's Delaware regiment, known popularly as "Blue Hen's Chickens," Col. Brooks's Massachusetts regiment, and the company of New York artillery, of which Capt. Alexander Hamilton was the commander, with their two small field pieces, occupied Chatterton Hill. Haslett and Brooks had barely reached their destination, when, with the approbation of Gen. Von Heister, Col. Rahl, with a large body of Hessians, halted and gave them battle. The Continental Contingent fought bravely, and several times repulsed the enemy. As their strength was being exhausted Gen. McDougall's brigade arrived, but after a severe struggle, in which nearly all the troops acted with great bravery, McDougall gave the order to retreat, as the numbers opposed to them were increasing. A competent historian remarks: "The fact that the entire detachment was not cut off from the main body of the army, and captured by the enemy, reflects the highest honour on those who occupied the hill, and fills one with wonder and admiration."[1]

The enemy's attack upon the main front of the American army was made by Gen. Leslie's division, and was at first met by Connecticut troops from Gen. Spencer's division who for a time sustained it with vigour, but as it grew more violent his troops retreated into the lines. After the occupation of Chatterton Hill, by Col. Rahl, Howe suspended hostile demonstrations and went into camp. The contemporary accounts make the Americans' loss in killed, wounded, and missing, about four hundred, and the British about the same.

A careful recent estimate based upon the regimental returns of November, 1776, with no account of Col. Has-

[1] H. B. Dawson, in Scharf's *Westchester County*, p. 443.

lett's and Col. Brooks's regiments, for which the returns are lacking, makes the total loss less than one hundred.[1]

That night Washington carefully removed all the sick, sent away the baggage, and strengthened his works in preparation for the attack which he confidently expected in the morning.[2]

Why Gen. Howe refrained from pushing his advantage has always been a puzzle to military men. Time and again he had won strategic positions which would have enabled him to defeat Washington if not crumple up the American forces, yet he restrained his hand and did nothing. In his *Narrative* he admits that he could have inflicted damage on the Americans at White Plains; but when pressed to explain his reasons for not carrying on the campaign to its logical conclusion on the line he was then following, he declined on the ground that he had "political reasons and no other for declining to explain." On his return home he was openly accused of having been in league with the whigs to let the rebellion go by default. His whole conduct of the war did much to give colour to this accusation.

For the moment Washington himself was puzzled at Howe's failure to follow him up sharply and energetically from White Plains, and indulged in the following specu-

[1] H. B. Dawson, in Scharf's *Westchester County*, p. 445.

[2] The authorities for the Battle of White Plains are: William Heath, *Memoirs*, pp. 68, 69, 70; Edition of William Abbat, 1901; Benjamin Tallmadge, *Memoirs*, pp. 13, 14; Wm. B. Reed, *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed*, i., pp. 246, 247; Wm. Hull, *Revolutionary Services and Civil Life*, pp. 54, 55, 56; John Marshall, *Life of Washington*, ii., p. 502–505; Wm. Gordon, *History of the War in America*, Edition of 1788, ii., pp. 340–342; Washington Irving, *Life of Washington*, Original Edition, 1855, ii., pp. 390–395; Henry B. Dawson, in Scharf's *History of Westchester County*, i., pp. 434–446. Mr. Dawson gives, both in the text and notes, extracts from many official and other documents. His account is the fullest and most modern.

lations in a letter to the President of Congress, dated November 6th:

> Yesterday the enemy made a sudden and unexpected movement from the several posts they had taken in our front. They broke up their whole encampment the preceding night, and have advanced towards Kingsbridge and the North River. The design of this manœuvre is a matter of much conjecture and speculation, and cannot be accounted for with any degree of certainty. The grounds we had taken possession of were strong and advantageous and such as they could not have gained without much loss of blood in case an attempt had been made. I had taken every possible precaution to prevent their outflanking us; which may have led to the present measure. They may still have in view their original plan, and, by a sudden wheel, try to accomplish it . . . (but) I expect the enemy will bend their force against Fort Washington and invest it immediately.

Washington's conjecture was correct. On the 16th Howe captured Fort Washington with twenty-seven hundred prisoners, our heaviest loss for this year, and crossing the Hudson into New Jersey headed southward, evidently for Philadelphia. Anticipating some such move, Washington also crossed to the Jerseys some days before Howe, and, with a portion of his diminishing army, put himself again in front of his antagonist. At the same time he dispatched Gen. Heath with a strong detachment to guard the entrance to the Highlands.

Upon the marches and counter marches of Washington and his small dispirited army across the Jerseys into Pennsylvania, after the fall of Fort Washington, and the manner in which he met the scarce concealed contempt and insubordination of Gen. Charles Lee, the discontent of the soldiers, and the want of supplies, this narrative may not dwell. The triumphant conclusion of his anxiety by the stormy and dangerous passage of the Delaware on

Christmas night, 1776, and the victory at Trenton and Princeton is a part of our Revolutionary story that will always make bright the name of the brave, wise, and patient Commander.[1]

With a dilatoriness which is simply astounding the British troops crawled from one place in New Jersey to another. Inconceivable as it sounds, yet it is the fact, that they took four days to march from New Brunswick to Trenton; they really appeared to dally and delay so as to give Washington the time he needed to carry off with him all his scanty war material. As the British leisurely entered Trenton, Washington just crossed the river ahead of them. Instead of pushing on, crushing Washington and taking Philadelphia and putting an end to the war, Howe quietly rested and distributed his army at detached posts, making his headquarters in New York where he spent the winter agreeably, playing cards.

No one who has studied the campaign in the Jerseys with any care but is impressed with the ease with which the British could have defeated and dispersed the American forces.

Different as are the estimates given by various authorities as to the exact number of troops Washington had under his command during the New Jersey campaigns, yet even if we accept the highest estimate, the Commander of the Continental Army never had, at any time, a force strong enough numerically with which he could have successfully resisted the British Army had that Army been hurled against him. To take one crucial test: when Washington crossed the Delaware on Christmas Day, 1776, some authorities give him about 6000 men,—others no more than 3300. Even this latter figure we believe to be too high. When the General re-crossed the Delaware

[1] *Observations on the Conduct of Sir William Howe at the White Plains*, London, 1779.

to attack the Hessians at Trenton, he had only 2400 men with him, as Humphreys states in his *Life of Putnam*, and as we know from other authoritative sources. This only makes the anomaly the greater. On one side, Howe had 20,000 well-trained veterans in the Jerseys; on the other, Washington had but 3000 poorly equipped but still determined men. The best that Washington could hope for was the continuance of a guerilla, or predatory war, as he termed it. "We must then retire to Augusta County in Virginia. Numbers will repair to us for safety, and we will try a predatory war. If overpowered, we must cross the Alleghany Mountains."[1]

The great talent of Washington lay in his taking advantage of every folly or stupidity of the generals arrayed against him. He hoped against hope, and never let an opportunity slip by which he could in any way benefit his cause.

Of this period Captain Humphreys says:

About the same time (November 7th) General Putnam was sent to the western side of the Hudson to provide against an irruption into the Jerseys, and soon after to Philadelphia to put that town into a posture of defence. Thither I attend him, without stopping to dilate on the subsequent incidents that might swell a folio, though here compressed to a single paragraph: without attempting to give in detail the skillful retrograde movements of our Commander-in-Chief, who, after detaching a garrison for Fort Washington, by preoccupying with extemporaneous redoubts and entrenchments the ridges from *Mile-Square* to *White Plains*, and by folding one Brigade behind another in rear of those ridges that run parallel with the *Sound*, brought off all his Artillery, Stores and Sick, in the face of a superior foe: without commenting on the partial and equivocal battle fought near the last mentioned village, or the cause why the British, then in full force (for the last of the Hessian Infantry and British Light-Horse had just arrived), did

[1] Irving's *Washington*, vol. ii., chap. xli.

not more seriously endeavour to induce a general engagement: without jeopardizing their military manœuvres in falling back to Kingsbridge, capturing Fort Washington, Fort Lee, and marching through the Jerseys: without enumerating the instances of rapine, murder, lust, and devastation that marked their progress, and filled our bosoms with horror and indignation: without describing how a division of our dissolving army, with General Washington, was driven before them beyond the Delaware: without painting the naked and forlorn condition of these much enduring men, amidst the rigours of an inclement season: and without even sketching the consternation that seized the States at this perilous period, when General Lee (in leading from the North a small reinforcement to our troops) was himself taken prisoner by surprise; when everything seemed decidedly declining to the last extremity, and when every prospect but served to augment the depression of dispair —until the genius of one man, in one day, at a single stroke, wrested from the veteran Battalions of Britain and Germany the fruits acquired by the total operations of a successful campaign, and reanimated the expiring hope of a whole nation, by the glorious enterprize at Trenton.

The detachment for the lower Highlands, included some of the Continental troops, and was under command of Major-Gen. William Heath. The permanent Camp was made near Peekskill.

The importance of controlling the passage through the Highlands had been early recognized by the New York Provincial Congress. The first attempts to fortify them were made by a Committee of that body following its own suggestion of June 13, 1775. A Commission, Messrs. Bedlow, Grenell, and Bayard, proceeded with an escort of twenty-four men to Martelaer's Island, nearly opposite West Point, which had been chosen by Mr. Bernard Romans, a civil engineer of European reputation, as a proper site for one of the forts, for which the name Fort Constitution was chosen.

Redoubts were to be erected upon Fort Hill directly east of the present Garrison's station, to be called the North and South redoubts, and also upon the summit of Sugar Loaf mountain. Forts were to be constructed upon either side of Pooplopens Kill opposite to Anthony's Nose, to be called Fort Clinton and Fort Montgomery. On November 8, 1775, the Continental Congress appointed Robert R. Livingston, Robert Treat Paine, and John Langdon as a Committee to examine "our fortifications on Hudson's River," and also determined that a "Commander of the Defences, with the rank of Colonel," should be appointed. The Committee made its report on November 23d, to John Hancock, President of the Congress. It found in charge of the fortifications on Martelaer's Rock, the Commissioners of New York, Messrs. Grenell, Bedlow, and Lanman, with Mr. Romans as their engineer. "We must own," says their report, "that we found the fort in a less defensible situation than we had reason to expect."

It does not command the reach to the Southward, nor can it injure a vessel turning the West Point, and after she had got around, a small breeze, or even the tide, will enable the ship to pass the curtain in a few minutes. The fortress is unfortunately commanded by all the grounds about it; but the most obvious defect is, that the grounds on the West Point are higher than the fortress, behind which an enemy might land without the least danger. In order to render the position impassable, it seems necessary that this place should be occupied, and batteries thrown upon the shore opposite.[1]

In January, 1776, the Continental Congress resolved that no further fortifications ought to be erected at Martelaer's Rock, but "that a point of land at Pooplopens

[1] *History of West Point*, by Capt. Edward C. Boynton, Adjutant of the Military Academy, p. 25.

Kill on said River ought to be effectually fortified without delay.[1]

A barbette battery was erected on Gravel Hill, on the mountain, under the direction of Col. Smith, who had superseded Mr. Romans as engineer. During the Spring of 1776 Fort Constitution had a small garrison of New York Provincial troops, under Col. Nicoll. Washington was anxious about the absolute security of the Highlands, and ordered Gen. Putnam on May 21, 1776, to send Lord Stirling, Col. Rufus Putnam, and Col. Henry Knox to the Highlands to report upon the state of the fortifications, and the condition of the garrison. Lord Stirling made on behalf of this Commission an elaborate report, which described minutely the completed work; that which was in progress, and that which was contemplated; it also made criticisms and offered suggestions for additional defences. Gen. Washington transmitted copies of this report to the officers at Fort Constitution, with a request that they express their opinion upon its conclusions, and make any additional suggestions. Lieutenant Col. Livingston, who had succeeded Col. Nicoll, noted in his reply the omission of Lord Stirling to recommend the "throwing up a work on the Point called West Point, directly opposite to us."[2]

Nothing seems to have been done at this time to carry out the plan for obstructing navigation, although a "Secret Committee" had been appointed on July 16, 1776, by the Provincial Congress of New York, for that purpose. In July, 1776, General George Clinton was appointed Commander of the newly raised levies, and stationed in the Highlands, where he soon was busily engaged with his brother, Gen. James Clinton in placing obstructions in the river, and hastening the completion of Fort Clinton and Fort Montgomery. This was the condition of affairs in

[1] Boynton's *West Point*, p. 27.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

the Highlands when Gen. Heath, on November 8th, was ordered to march with his division to Peekskill. On November 11th, Gen. Washington, with Lord Stirling, Gen. James Clinton, Gen. George Clinton, Gen. Heath, Gen. Mifflin, and others, "took a view of Fort Montgomery, and the other works up the River." Gen. Washington requested Gen. Heath, on November 12th, to take an early morning ride with him, in which the ground at "the gorge of the Highlands," was reconnoitred. Upon their return, Gen. Heath was "appointed to the command of the troops and posts in the Highlands on both sides of the river, with written instructions to secure and fortify them with all possible expedition, making a distribution of his troops to the different posts."[1]

With the close of the campaign of 1776, the British Army having gone into Winter Quarters, and the enlistment terms of most of the American troops having expired, Washington and the Continental Congress bent their energies towards raising a new army organized under a more thorough system. The evil of the years 1775 and 1776 was the short enlistments of the men. This it was proposed to remedy by calling for soldiers who would "engage *for three years* or the war." Eighty-eight regiments were organized on this basis to serve from January 1, 1777. Connecticut's proportion was eight battalions and she proceeded to fill them, as did the other States with their quotas. The line and field officers were selected for fitness and merit as shown by their previous service. Large numbers of the old soldiers enlisted and gave the new army a sense of superiority not before experienced.

The Sixth of the Connecticut Regiments—to be known thereafter as the "Connecticut Line" of the Continental Army—was recruited largely from New Haven County. William Douglas, of Northford, was appointed its Colonel

[1] *Memoirs of Gen. Heath*, p. 76.

on account of his worth and military ability shown in the operations around New York. But his constitution had been undermined and upon his death, in May, 1777, Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs succeeded him. David Humphreys was selected as one of the newly appointed Captains of the Sixth. He must have been known to Col. Douglas, who had formerly been the Major of the Second Militia Regiment, with which Humphreys served in New York, and Douglas was happy doubtless to secure so good an officer to command one of his Companies. With a Continental Captain's Commission, bearing date of January 1, 1777, Humphreys will thereafter be borne on the rolls of the Sixth Regiment for the next three years. But he was destined for a larger field of activity than the usual Company duties could promise, in being invited presently, in March or April, 1777, by General Samuel Holden Parsons, to become the Brigade Major, or in modern designation, the Assistant-Adjutant-General of the General's newly formed First Brigade of the Connecticut Line. From this date to the close of the war Humphreys will be constantly engaged on Staff duty with one General or another. He will now be known as "Major Humphreys" for some three years, when higher honours will fall to him.

The duties of a Brigade Major not only included the drafting and dispatching of orders, the preparation and preservation of the records of the Brigade, but also an oversight of the Commissariat and equipments. It required quickness and adaptability. The one who held it must also have the pen of a ready writer and be an expert horseman. Humphreys was possessed of these necessary qualifications. He proved himself to be a model officer, a strict disciplinarian even to the point of being a martinet. Ceremonious in bearing and punctilious in his dress, he never overlooked a breach of discipline or

etiquette, while as we shall see in subsequent chapters, he never forgot an officer's duty to be at the point of danger in action.

Humphreys's first experience in the field this year was in connection with the British expedition against Danbury, Connecticut, in April, conducted by Gen. Tryon. The expedition against that town had been planned by Sir Henry Clinton, for the destruction of a large quantity of stores, collected there for the use of the American Army in the Highlands. It was also a part of the plan to clear the way for an uninterrupted progress of the British forces northward, that a junction might be made with the army then gathered in Canada to crush "the rebellion." On the evening of April 24, 1777, the British fleet, consisting of twenty transports and six warships, sailed from New York. Two thousand selected troops under the command of Gen. William Tryon, with Gen. Agnew and Sir William Erskine as aids, were thought sufficient to repel any attacking force. Passing through the Sound the fleet anchored near the mouth of the Saugatuck River about four o'clock on the afternoon of Friday, April 25th. As the ships with the fiery standard proceeded up the Sound, many of the people in the Shore towns trembled and wondered what would be its destination. When it passed by Norwalk and threaded its way among the Islands along the coast, its purpose was suspected. From Norwalk swift messengers were sent to Danbury, and from Fairfield an express was dispatched to inform Gen. Wooster at New Haven. In the meantime the British soldiers had disembarked and under the guidance of two Tories taken up their march toward Danbury. As the way was rough and day declining, after two hours the troops were halted and encamped in the township of Weston. The local militia and such recruits as could be hastily gathered were to be under the command of Gen. Gold S. Silliman of Fair-

field, who ordered them to rendezvous at Redding Ridge. Gen. Wooster on hearing of the descent of Tryon on Connecticut, consulted with Gen. Arnold, who was in New Haven, and together they were able to secure a contingent of the regiment of Col. Meigs and some men belonging to the Connecticut Line, with a few officers, one of whom was Captain Humphreys. As soon as this small company was gathered together it proceeded to Redding. This force had not been called out by any competent authority and was purely a volunteer one. It put itself entirely under the orders of the local commander, Gen. Silliman, although a Continental Major-General commanded a division of it. So obnoxious was the name of Gen. Tryon to every Connecticut patriot that all sprang instinctively to arms, for they knew that cruelty, destruction, and bloodshed would follow in his track. The British proceeded in a leisurely manner toward Danbury. An incident which reads like an extract from a novel of the late G. P. R. James is traditional in the countryside. As they approached Hoyt's Hill, a few miles from Danbury, a solitary horseman is seen upon its brow, brandishing a sword, and turning his head as if to address a large body of soldiers, he shouted in a loud voice: "Halt!" "The whole universe wheel into Kingdoms!" The regulars, among whom were men who had not qualified at Long Island or White Plains, now fell back and Tryon sent a party to investigate. Before the investigators reached the summit, like the men of Roderick Dhu at the signal of their bold chieftain, the mysterious horseman had disappeared. The British, without having encountered any serious opposition entered Danbury late on Saturday afternoon. Here the only force to oppose them consisted of fifty Continental soldiers and one hundred militiamen under the command of Col. Joseph P. Cook, a native of the town. Resistance would have been useless. Four young patriots who discharged

their muskets at the passing troops were deliberately shot down. Gen. Tryon established his headquarters in the house of Mr. Nehemiah Dibble. Gen. Agnew and Sir William Erskine quartered themselves as unwelcome and uninvited guests in the house of Mr. Benjamin Knapp with an escort of mounted infantry. Orders were then given to discover and burn the stores. The soldiers soon found them. Many barrels and packages had been stored in the "Episcopal Church."[1]

The pork, beef, and other provisions were brought into the street and set on fire making a dense cloud of smoke and filling the streets with liquid fat which was declared to be knee-deep. The odour of the burning meat and grain was penetrating and disagreeable. When the soldiers discovered the casks of liquors they partook so freely that they were soon unfit for duty. The frightened women and children who saw the drunken men clumsily piling the fuel around the burning provisions, also saw by the fitful light the white cross marking the houses of the Tories. The scenes of revelry and ribaldry were frightful to the already terrified inhabitants. Some of the stores found in barns or houses belonging to patriots were destroyed by setting fire to the buildings themselves. At one o'clock on Sunday morning Gen. Tryon learned of the arrival of the American troops and their encampment at Bethel. Early on Sunday morning the British troops were mustered for inspection and drill. Soon after fire was seen breaking out in various parts of the village street, which destroyed nineteen dwellings and several shops.

[1] This edifice had been erected "about 1763." Redding, Danbury, and the surrounding hamlets were a part of the extensive missionary circuit of the Rev. John Beach of Newton. It was a building capable of seating four or five hundred people. A separate parish known as St. James was organized in 1835. The first church was pulled down and a new one built in 1844. The present church edifice dates from 1867. See Dr. E. E. Beardsley's *History of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut*, i., pp. 211, 213.

The Commander then gave order to march and the troops took their way to the Sound through Ridgebury. The whole American force, to oppose the British, was seven hundred men. It was arranged that Gen. Silliman and Gen. Arnold with five hundred men should march forward to intercept the British, if possible, and that Gen. Wooster should attack them in the rear. At nine o'clock Gen. Wooster met them on the wooded heights near Ridgefield following the Norwalk road. He attacked them with such impetuosity that one regiment was compelled to break ranks and forty prisoners were taken. With his small half-armed company Gen. Wooster pursued them, harassing their rear, until a favourable turn in the road enabled the British to wheel around and attack him with artillery and muskets. An experienced soldier, he resisted with intrepidity and quickly returned their fire. He turned his horse, waved his sword and, shouting cheerfully "Come on, my boys, never mind such random shots," rode forward. He had hardly finished speaking when he was seen to fall from his horse. A ball fired, as was currently reported, "by a malignant Tory who recognized his person, struck him obliquely in the back, breaking the bone as it passed and burying itself in his body." Friends gathered around him and he was tenderly carried from the field upon his military sash. After lingering in great pain he died early in the morning of May 2, 1777. It was to this incident of the skirmish that Col. Humphreys alludes in this couplet in his poem, *On the Love of Country*,

> Wooster was seen to stand—and like that oak,
> I saw him fall beneath the fatal stroke.

Ignorant of the death of their friend, Gens. Silliman and Arnold pushed on to Ridgefield which they reached about eleven o'clock. Before the enemy approached they had

thrown up across the road a temporary barricade and were protected on one flank by a house and a barn and on the other by a large rock. As the divisions of Gen. Agnew and Lord Erskine approached and perceived the position of the American troops, they returned their fire and for ten minutes there was a sharp contest. Finally the Americans were obliged to give way and the British gained the ledge. In spite of the superior force and the impossibility of making a continued resistance the militiamen were remarkably cool and brave. Gen. Arnold had a horse shot under him. The fire of the Americans continued to harass the British until nightfall when Gen. Tryon encamped near Ridgefield. Before leaving on Monday morning the Congregational Church and four houses were set on fire by his soldiers. The British then continued their march harassed by the incessant fire of the Americans. Finally they crossed the Saugatuck, the Americans marching at an equal gait with them on the east side, and keeping up a brisk cannonade whenever opportunity afforded. A few chosen men of the Continental Contingent forded the Saugatuck and attacked the British in the rear at intervals for several miles. At Naugatuck Bridge the Americans under Arnold again made a stand, placed their artillery, and waited. Upon perceiving the strength of the position the British soldiers, wheeling to the left, forded the river three miles above, and then ascended Compo Hill from which in vain the united force of the Americans tried to dislodge them. To cover their embarkation a body of fresh troops was landed from the transports. The fleet immediately sailed for Huntington, Long Island. Col. Lamb with his artillery sent a parting shot. The American loss exceeded one hundred killed, wounded, and missing; that of the British was not less than one hundred and seventy. The stores were very valuable and their loss put the army to a serious incon-

venience. The thousand tents were especially regretted as they were greatly needed. This raid excited widespread and deep indignation throughout the country particularly in Connecticut.[1]

An opportunity soon came for retaliation. It was learned that the British had been collecting stores and forage from many quarters which were under a strong guard at Sag Harbour on Long Island. Gen. Parsons determined that an attempt to destroy them was feasible. Such an enterprise required a commander cautious, quick, and patient, and Col. Meigs who had shown good judgment and much military knowledge while in the expedition under Gen. Arnold for the capture of Quebec, was chosen. Major Humphreys accompanied him. The difficulties were great as a large force of British regulars might be patrolling the coast and there was no protection of Long Island Sound from warships of the enemy. What was to be done must be done secretly and quickly.

Col. Meigs selected his men for this service with much discrimination. On May 21, 1777, he embarked two hundred and thirty-four men in thirteen whaleboats at New Haven. He rowed at once to Guilford from which the passage across the Sound was most direct. He was compelled on account of high seas to delay setting out from Sachem's Head until one o'clock on the afternoon of May 23d, leaving sixty-four of his men, for various reasons, in Guilford. He was convoyed by two armed sloops, and reached Southold at six o'clock. Here it was learned that the British guards had been summoned to New York, and only a force thought sufficient to protect the stores left at

[1] The authorities for the Danbury raid are: *History of Danbury*, by James M. Bailey, New York, 1896, pp. 55–98; *Connecticut in the Revolution*, Royal R. Hinman, Hartford, 1842; *Life of George Washington*, John Marshall, pp. 89, 90; William Heath, *Memoirs; Military Journal*, James Thacher; Oration on Gen. Wooster in *Proceedings at the Completion of the Wooster Monument, Danbury, April 27, 1854*, p. 60, New Haven, Storer and Morehouse.

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Sag Harbour. Col. Meigs had the whaleboats transferred by land to the southern arm of Peconic Bay, a distance of fifteen miles. Then one hundred and ninety men embarked in them and rowed to Sag Harbour, five miles away, the vicinity of which was reached at midnight. The boats having been hidden in the shelter of a wood under a strong guard, Col. Meigs formed his army in military order and marched them to Sag Harbour with great dispatch. The British outposts were reached at two o'clock. They were charged by the Americans with fixed bayonets and soon overpowered. The Americans went at once to the wharf which was entirely unguarded. The alarm, however, was given, and an armed schooner, manned by seventy soldiers and carrying twelve guns, began to fire at a distance of one hundred and fifty yards. This was continued for three quarters of an hour. Without being deterred from their purpose Col. Meigs directed his troops to seize and destroy the store-ships which consisted of twelve brigs and sloops, one of them being the armed vessel. The vessels were all burned under the direction of the detachment sent for the purpose commanded by Captain Troup. The stores thus destroyed included one hundred and twenty tons of hay, corn, and oats, ten hogsheads of rum, and much unspecified merchandise. Six of the British soldiers were killed, and ninety taken prisoners. At two o'clock that afternoon Col. Meigs with his troops and prisoners reached Guilford, after an absence of only twenty-five hours, and without the loss of a single man. This exploit revived the spirits of the Connecticut troops and cheered the Commander-in-Chief in his Camp at Middlebrook in New Jersey. It was the proud duty of Major Humphreys to carry the dispatches announcing the issue of the expedition to Washington. In his letter to the Commander-in-Chief, Gen. Parsons writing from New Haven, May 25, 1777, says: "Maj. Humphreys, who waits on your

Excellency with the account, was in the action with Col. Meigs, and will be able to give any further necessary information."[1]

Then for the first time probably, the young aide and the great commander met. No records of his first impressions of the man upon whom, humanly speaking, the destinies of the Country depended, are to be found. It would have added much to our knowledge could our soldier have left graphic, terse descriptions of some of the great characters under whom he served. The fashion of the age was, however, against such expressions and complimentary allusions; and it was then considered the mark of good breeding and of polite writing to avoid describing the salient features of a scene or person.

Major Humphreys viewed the situation of the main army, noted the hopes and fears of the Commander-in-Chief, and then returned to New Haven, bearing to Gen. Parsons a dispatch containing these words of grateful appreciation:

Headquarters,
Middlebrook,
May 29th, 1777.

Dear Sir:

I am just now favoured with your letter of the 25th by Major Humphreys. The intelligence communicated by it is truly interesting and agreeable, and now I shall take occasion not only to give you my hearty approbation of your conduct in planning the expedition to Long Island; but to return my sincere thanks to Lieut-Col. Meigs and all the officers and men engaged in it.

This enterprise so fortunate in the execution will greatly distress the enemy in the important and essential article of forage, and reflect much honour upon those who performed it.

[1] *Life and Letters of General Samuel H. Parsons*, by Charles S. Hall, p. 98.

I shall ever be happy to reward merit when in my power, and therefore wish you to inquire for a vacant ensigncy in some of the regiments for Sergeant Gunning, to which you will promote him, advising me of the same and the time.

I am, Sir, &c.,
G. Washington."[1]

To reinforce his army, Washington summoned to Middlebrook all available forces, among them Gen. Parsons' Brigade.[2]

After some slight skirmishing on the right and left flanks of the American army, which was met with vigour by Col. Morgan's riflemen and Lord Stirling's Corps, in the vicinity of Woodbridge, Westfield, and Scotch Plains, Lord Howe withdrew his forces by way of Rahway to Amboy, from whence they were to embark for Staten Island, and thence sail for the Delaware or Chesapeake. Washington was puzzled by these retrograde movements, but thought they were meant to veil a real purpose, either a junction with the northern army under Burgoyne, which had then appeared on Lake Champlain, or an expedition against the southern ports. In a letter of July 2, 1777, to Gov. Trumbull, he says:

Since my last, the enemy disappointed in their attempt upon our right, have made a diversion upon our left, and frustrated in that also have now abandoned the Jerseys, and encamped

[1] Jared Sparks, *Letters of Washington*, iv., p. 44.

[2] Parsons must have been gifted with a sense of humour, judging from this description of their Jersey camp sent to his wife June 22d: "We are about two miles advanced in front of the Mountain where the army is posted, on the road to Quibbletown, about two and a half miles northeast of Samptown, about three miles west of Browerstown, and about ten miles northwest of Spanktown, about eight miles northeast of Brunswick, six miles from Middlebrook, about one mile from the stream called Bound Brook, eastward but further distant from the village of that name. If you can find me by this description, I shall be rejoiced to hear from you."—Hall's *Life of General Parsons*, p. 103.

upon Staten Island. There is a great stir among their shipping, and in all probability, their next movement will be by water, though it is impossible to decide with certainty to what place. But I last night received intelligence from Gen. Schuyler that Gen. Burgoyne is beginning to operate against Ticonderoga and its dependencies; if it is not merely a diversion but a serious attack, of which it bears strongly the appearance, it is certain proof that the next step of Howe's army will be toward Peekskill, and very suddenly, if possible to get possession of the position in the Highlands before the army can form a junction with the troops already there.

To guard against contingencies I have ordered Gen. Parsons and Gen. Varnum's Brigades to march off with all despatch toward Peekskill, and when they have arrived at or near that point, a reinforcement of four of the strongest Massachusetts regiments will proceed thence immediately to Albany on their way to Ticonderoga.[1]

Soon after these troops proceeded across the hills between Middlebrook and the Hudson, and were posted in the positions which most needed strengthening.

[1] Sparks's *Letters of Washington*, iv., pp. 477, 478.

CHAPTER VII

The Continental Forces

Humphreys at Peekskill—His Description of the Summer of 1777—Landing of the British at Verplanck's Point—Gov. Clinton Adjourns the Assembly—Humphreys' Description of the Capture of Fort Montgomery—The Selection of West Point—Humphreys' Account of it—The Commencement of the Fortifications—Dwight's Description of his Excursion with Humphreys—The Victory of Monmouth and Arrival of French Fleet—The New Camp at White Plains—Humphreys' Account of the Continental Forces—Headquarters of Gen. Putnam at Redding—Humphreys' Description of the Condition of the Soldiers and of the Camp—British Raid on Horse Neck—Humphreys' Account of it—Putnam's Farewell Order.

MAJOR HUMPHREYS' military duties again brought him to the banks of the Hudson. His duties were arduous, since there was very great apprehension that the troops were insufficient to defend the forts, and that the obstructions in the river would not seriously impede the passage of the British warships. The defences had been strengthened by redoubts thrown up on Verplanck's Point and the base of Anthony's Nose by the troops at Peekskill. During the summer there was much drilling in camp, no enemy was immediately in front, and a feeling of security reigned over the encampment, then under the command of General Putnam. After the southern expedition of the British, and the disastrous battle of the Brandywine on September 11, 1777, the victorious enemy pursued

their advantage, and again joined issue at Germantown, six miles from Philadelphia, on October 4th. Later they went into winter quarters in that city, while Washington withdrew to Valley Forge.

Major Humphreys thus comments upon the events of the summer around Peekskill:

In the neighbourhood of General Putnam there was no enemy capable of exciting alarms. The army left at New-York seemed only designed for its defence. In it were several entire Corps, composed of Tories who had flocked to the British standard. There was, besides, a band of lurking miscreants, not properly enrolled, who staid chiefly at West Chester, from whence they infested the country between the two armies, pillaged the cattle and carried off the peaceable inhabitants. It was an unworthy policy in the British Generals to patronize Banditti. The Whig inhabitants on the edge of our lines and still lower down, who had been plundered in a merciless manner, delayed not to strip the Tories in return. People, most nearly connected and allied frequently became most exasperated and inveterate in malice. Then the ties of fellowship were broken—then friendship itself being soured to enmity, the mind readily gave way to private revenge, uncontrouled retaliation and all the deforming passions that disgrace humanity. Enormities, almost without a name, were perpetrated—at the description of which, the bosom, not frozen to apathy, must glow with a mixture of pity and indignation. To prevent the predatory incursions from below and to cover the county of West Chester, Gen. Putnam detached from his head Quarters, at Peeks Kill, Meig's Regiment, which in the course of the Campaign struck several partizan strokes and achieved the objects for which it was sent. He likewise took measures without noise or ostentation to secure himself from being surprized and carried within the British lines by the Tories, who had formed a plan for the purpose.

The information of this intended enterprize, conveyed to him through several channels, was corroborated by that obtained and transmitted by the Commander-in-Chief.

It was not wonderful that many of these Tories were able, undiscovered, to penetrate far into the country and even to go with letters or messages from one British army to another. The inhabitants who were well affected to the royal cause, afforded them every possible support and their knowledge of the different routes gave them a farther facility in performing their peregrinations. Sometimes the most active Loyalists (as the Tories wished to denominate themselves) who had gone into the British Posts and received promises of Commissions upon enlisting a certain number of soldiers, came back again secretly with recruiting Instructions. Sometimes these and others who came from the enemy within the verge of our Camps, were detected and condemned to death in conformity to the usages of war. But the British Generals, who had an unlimited supply of money at their command, were able to pay with so much liberality, that emissaries could always be found. Still, it is thought that the intelligence of the American Commanders, was, at least equally accurate; notwithstanding the poverty of their military chest and the inability of rewarding mercenary agents, for secret services, in proportion to their risque and merit.

A person by the name of Palmer, who was a Lieutenant in the Tory new Levies, was detected in the Camp at Peeks Kill. Governor Tryon who commanded the new Levies reclaimed him as a British Officer, and represented the heinous crime of condemning a man commissioned by his Majesty and threatened vengeance in case he should be executed. General Putnam wrote the following pithy reply:

Sir,

Nathan Palmer, a Lieutenant in your King's service, was taken in my Camp as a *Spy*—he was tried as a *Spy*—he was condemned as a *Spy*—and you may rest assured, Sir, he shall be hanged as a *Spy*.

I have the honour to be, etc.

Israel Putnam.

His Excellency, Governor Tryon.
P. S. Afternoon.
He is hanged.

Important transactions soon occurred. Not long after the two Brigades had marched from Peekskill to Pennsylvania, a reinforcement arrived at New York from Europe. Appearances indicated that offensive operations would follow. General Putnam, having been reduced in force to a single Brigade in the field and a single Regiment in garrison at Fort Montgomery, repeatedly informed the Commander-in-Chief that the posts committed to his charge must in all probability be lost, in case an attempt should be made upon them; and that circumstanced as he was, he could not be responsible for the consequences. His situation was certainly to be lamented, but it was not in the power of the Commander-in-Chief to alter it; except by authorizing him to call upon the Militia for aid—an aid always precarious; and often so tardy, as when obtained to be of no utility.[1]

Under the convoy of the *Preston* the third division of the British Army, with Sir Henry Clinton as its Commander, sailed from New York on October 4, 1777, in thirty transports, and before noon anchored in Haverstraw Bay off Tarrytown. On the following night, the soldiers, who had made a camp on the shore, re-embarked, and sailed slowly up the river, and reached Verplanck's Point, a short distance below Peekskill, about noon. A company of four hundred landed from the transports, when the American guard immediately abandoned their position without any attempt at resistance, leaving a twelve pound cannon behind them. At the same time Sir James Wallace moved up toward Peekskill "to mask the only communication they had across the river on the side of

[1] Marshall's *Washington*, iii., p. 184.

the Highlands," says Sir Henry Clinton in his official report.

Early on the morning of October 6th, the advance guard of five hundred regulars and the provincial regiment of Col. Oliver De Lancey under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell and Col. Robinson took up their march for Dunderberg to occupy its pass. It was their intention to make a detour of seven miles round the hill and attack Fort Montgomery from the river. Gen. Vaughan with twelve hundred men was to march to Fort Clinton and cover the corps under Lieut.-Col. Campbell. When Gen. Putnam observed the movement of the British he was entirely misled as to their object and thought that they only intended to attack the storehouses and works on the east side of the river and did not then send reinforcements, as he was requested by some of the officers, to the west side forts. Levies of New York and Connecticut militia had been previously ordered to strengthen the troops in the Highlands, but had not yet arrived in sufficient numbers to materially increase the force. The march of the British over and around Dunderberg was both long and perilous. No regular military formation could be observed while climbing steep slopes and threading narrow paths, and the attacks upon Fort Montgomery and Fort Clinton were almost simultaneous. Col. Bruyn with fifty Continentals and Col. McNaughton with fifty militia were sent from Fort Clinton to sustain Capt. Jackson, who was watching the enemy's movements in the Haverstraw road. Capt. John Feund with sixty men and a brass swivel-gun went from Fort Montgomery to harass the approaching enemy. The attack by the British was impetuous and drove Col. Bruyn and Col. McNaughton back to Fort Clinton, although they fought bravely to the very entrance of the fort.

Upon hearing rumours of the British fleet in the Hudson,

Gov. Clinton adjourned the Legislature then sitting at Kingston, and came with great dispatch to Fort Montgomery of which he took command, and posted various parties to guard the mountain passes and approaches to the forts.

The messenger sent on the morning of the sixth by him to Gen. Putnam failed to reach that commander in time to be of any avail. Sir Henry Clinton with the main body of soldiers then attacked the retreating Americans, and received an incessant fire from a small force behind a stone wall until finally by superior numbers he overpowered it, and occupied that part of the battleground where he remained until Lieut.-Col. Campbell came up. At five o'clock a flag was sent to Fort Montgomery demanding its surrender. Col. Livingston who received it said the fort would be defended to the very last extremity. After a desperate resistance the works were carried. At the same time the garrison of Fort Clinton was receiving an onslaught from Col. Campbell and his troops; it was met with much spirit and before the works were finally stormed and taken by Col. Campbell, under the cover of darkness many of the garrison escaped as they knew the country, some by the river and others by the various mountain roads. The killed, wounded, and missing on the American side were nearly two hundred and fifty. The British lost forty killed and one hundred and fifty wounded. This was one of the severest calamities that had befallen the American cause. The command of the river was necessary to any continued resistance. The works, while neither complete nor impregnable, still were effective had they been garrisoned with enough men. The necessity of the case did not alter that, and the large expenditure of time and money upon them was thus in a few hours rendered useless.

Col. Humphreys thus describes the assault in his *Life of Putnam:*

The Author of these Memoirs, then Major of Brigade to the first Connecticut Brigade, was alone at Head-Quarters, when the firing began. He hastened to Colonel Wyllys, the senior officer in Camp and advised him to dispatch all the men not on duty to Fort Montgomery, without waiting for orders. About five hundred men marched instantly under Colonel Meigs; and the author, with Doctor Beardsley, a Surgeon in the Brigade, rode at full speed through a bye-path, to let the garrison know that a reinforcement was on the march. Notwithstanding all the haste these officers made to and over the river, the Fort was so completely invested on their arrival, that it was impossible to enter. They went on board the new Frigate, which lay near the fortress, and had the misfortune to be idle, though not unconcerned, spectators of the storm. They saw the minutest actions distinctly when the works were carried. The Frigate, after receiving several platoons, slipped her cable and proceeded a little way up the river: but the wind and tide becoming adverse, the crew set her on fire, to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy; whose ships were approaching. The louring darkness of the night, the profound stillness that reigned, the interrupted flashes of the flames that illuminated the waters, the long shadows of the cliffs that now and then were seen, the explosion of the cannon which were left loaded in the ship, and the reverberating echo which resounded, at intervals, between the stupendous mountains on both sides of the river, composed an awful night piece, for persons prepared (by the preceding scene) to contemplate subjects of horrid sublimity.[1]

The British fleet proceeded up the Hudson and burnt Esopus and on its return demolished and burned Fort Clinton and Fort Montgomery. The cheering news that soon after came of the surrender of Gen. Burgoyne and his army at Saratoga rendered the victory of Sir Henry Clinton of little value to the British cause.[2]

[1] Humphreys' *Life of Putnam*, Edition of 1788, p. 169.

[2] The authorities in addition to Col. Humphreys are: Marshall's *Life of*

The British troops on their return down the Hudson after the destruction of the Highland fortifications were followed for many miles on land by a detachment from Col. Meigs' and other regiments of the Highland garrison.[1]

Gen. Putnam removed the permanent camp from the river, leaving a small garrison in the defences still remaining on the east side of the Hudson, to the vicinity of New Rochelle, by which change he was enabled to repress some of the lawlessness of the British "Cowboys" and American "Skinners." Major Humphreys gives a few particulars of the weeks spent in this manner and the gallant forced marches of Col. Meigs from Crompond to Westchester by which he "surprised and broke up for a time the band of free booters, of whom he brought off fifty together with many cattle and horses which they had stolen."[2]

Late in the fall, as we learn from Major Humphreys,

General Putnam advanced towards the British lines. As he had received intelligence that small bodies of the enemy were out, with orders from Governor Tryon to burn Wright's mills, he prevented it by detaching three parties, of one hundred men in each. One of these parties fell in with and captured thirty-five, and another forty of the new levies. But as he could not prevent a third hostile party from burning the house of Mr. Van Tassel, a noted Whig and a Committee-man, who was forced to go along with them, naked and barefoot, on the icy ground, in a freezing night, he, for the professed purpose of retaliation, sent Capt. Buchanan, in a Whale-boat, to burn the house of Oliver De Lancey on York Island. Buchanan effected his object, and by this expedition put a period, for the present, to that unmeaning and wanton species of destruction.

Washington, pp. 292–301; Leake's *Life and Times of Gen. John Lamb*, pp. 174–181; Wm. Heath's *Memoirs*, p. 120; Capt. Edward C. Boynton's *History of West Point*, pp. 44–48; Henry B. Dawson's *Battles of the United States*, pp. 332–350; *Life of Gen. William Hull*, pp. 110–111.

[1] Humphreys' *Life of Gen. Putnam*, Edition of 1788, p. 171.

[2] *Life of Gen. Putnam*, p. 171.

While Gen. Putnam quartered at New Rochelle, a scouting party which had been to West Farms, below Westchester, surrounded the house in which Col. James De Lancey lodged, and, notwithstanding he crept under the bed the better to be concealed, brought him to Headquarters before morning. This officer was exchanged by the British General without delay, and placed at the head of the Cow boys, a licentious Corps of irregulars, who in the sequel, committed unheard-of depredations and excesses.

It was distressing to see so beautiful a part of the country so barbarously wasted, and often to witness some peculiar scene of female misery. For most of the female inhabitants had been obliged to fly within the lines possessed by one army or the other. Near our quarters was an affecting instance of human vicissitude. Mr. William Sutton, of Maroneck, an inoffensive man, a merchant by profession, who lived in a decent fashion, and whose family had as happy prospects as almost any in the country, upon some imputation of Toryism, went to the enemy. His wife oppressed with grief in her disagreeable state of dereliction, did not long survive. Betsey Sutton, their eldest daughter, was a modest and lovely young woman, of about fifteen years old, when at the death of her mother, the care of five or six younger children devolved upon her. She was discreet and provident beyond her years. But when we saw her, she looked feeble in health—broken in spirit—wan, melancholy, and dejected. She said "that their last cow, which furnished milk for the children, had lately been taken away—that they had frequently been plundered of their wearing apparel and furniture, she believed by both parties—that they had little to lose—and that she knew not where to procure bread for the dear little ones, who had no father to provide for them"—*no mother*—she was going to say, but a torrent of tears choked articulation. In coming to that part of the country again, after some campaigns had elapsed, I found the habitation desolate, and the garden overgrown with weeds. Upon inquiry, I learnt, that as soon as we left the place some ruffians broke into the house while she lay in bed, in the latter part of the night: and that, having been

terrified by their rudeness, she ran half-naked, into a neighbouring swamp, where she continued until morning—there the poor girl caught a violent cold which ended in a consumption. It finished a life without spot—and a career of suffering commenced and continued without a fault.

Sights of wretchedness always touched with commiseration the feelings of General Putnam, and prompted his generous soul to succour the afflicted. But the indulgence which he shewed, whenever it did not militate against his duty, towards the deserted and suffering families of the Tories in the State of New-York, was the cause of his becoming unpopular with no inconsiderable class of the people in that State. On the other side, he had conceived an unconquerable aversion to many of the persons who were entrusted with the disposal of Tory-property, because he believed them to have been guilty of peculations and other infamous practices. But although the enmity between him and the Sequestrators was acrimonious as mutual; yet he lived in habits of amity with the most respectable characters in public departments, as well as in private life.[1]

The loss of the fortifications on the Hudson was a matter of great mortification to General Washington. The enemy, however, could make no use of their victory as the surrender at Saratoga had changed their plans and they maintained no garrison above Stony Point. Congress had on November 5, 1777, placed the Highland posts under the charge of Gen. Gates, or rather added them to the northern department, but that commander never assumed any active control there, for soon after he was made President of the Board of War and repaired to York, Pennsylvania, where Congress was then in session. Gen. Clinton, in whom Washington had great confidence, temporarily took the command on the west side of the river. Some of the perplexities disturbing Washington at this time may be imagined from the experiences of his aide, Col. Alexander

[1] *Life of Putnam*, pp. 172–175.

Hamilton, who had been sent late in October to order reinforcements from the Northern Army for the main army then acting upon the defensive near Red Bank, Gloucester County, New Jersey, opposite Philadelphia. Gen. Gates, who was in Albany with a large portion of his victorious army, after having dispatched Col. Morgan with his riflemen, was reluctant to send more than four thousand men to the Commander-in-Chief. He proposed defending New York and New England, and undertaking in the spring an expedition for the recovery of Ticonderoga. Many of his troops were to be sent to the Highlands under the command of Gen. Putnam. Upon his way to Albany, Col. Hamilton visited Gov. Clinton and Gen. Putnam. The Governor was then with his levies of militia and a few continental troops at New Windsor near Newburgh. Gen. Putnam with a greater number of troops, including those from the northern army, than he required, had encamped near Fishkill. He had recently held a council of war to determine upon the best course of action for the larger body of soldiers now under his command. His favourite plan of an attack upon New York was then occupying all his attention. He knew that Gen. Washington had previously approved of such an attempt and could see no reason why it should not now be made. The old veteran was extremely desirous to retain for his contemplated purpose nearly all the troops in his camp. Evidently the tact of Hamilton had deserted him for he almost came to an open collision with Putnam and advised his chief that Gov. Clinton should be appointed to the command of the Highlands and Putnam removed, "as his blunders and caprices are endless." By the advice of Clinton a peremptory command in the name of Washington was sent by Col. Hamilton to Gen. Putnam to detach and forward all the Continental troops then in his army and also to turn back to Red Bank some New Jersey troops about to cross

over to Peekskill. The delay, however, had been both annoying and hazardous as in the meantime Fort Mifflin had been taken and Washington's army greatly reduced by death, wounds, and illness. It is not necessary to dwell here upon the actual conspiracy of Gen. Conway aided by a strong party in the Continental Congress, several general and other officers, including Gen. Gates, whose vain and shallow nature was puffed up by victory and flattery, to supersede Washington in the command of the army.[1]

Washington was not naturally suspicious and bore slights and opposition usually with great outward calmness. He had, however, been so harassed and thwarted in the pursuance of his plans that he wrote in a tone of unusual sharpness to Gen. Putnam.

> I cannot but say there has been more delay in the march of the troops than I think necessary; and I could wish that in the future my orders may immediately be complied with, without arguing upon the propriety of them. If any accident ensues from obeying them, the fault will be upon me not you.[2]

The ease with which the British advanced up the Hudson convinced Washington that that most important central river needed further and stronger defences. It was then that West Point became the great strategic position which it held in the northern field during the remaining years of the war. Major Humphreys claims for his department commander, General Putnam, the honour of selecting the point as the most impregnable site upon the River, and the claim is essentially sustained by the records. In previous pages of this Memoir it has been shown what efforts General Heath and the Provincial Convention of

[1] Chief Justice Marshall in his *Life of Washington* gives a clear and unprejudiced account of its inception and culmination; see pp. 336–348, volume iii., also pp. 342–373, Washington Irving, *Life of Washington*, iii.

[2] Irving's *Washington*, iii., p. 316.

New York had already made to protect the Hudson. West Point had been suggested as a site to be considered, but nothing was done toward occupying it. Washington finally, on December 2, 1777, called Putnam's attention to the matter and instructed him "to employ your whole force and all the means in your power for erecting and completing such works and obstructions as may be necessary to defend the river." Putnam at once examined West Point and proposed to fortify it. General Clinton also recommended the site to Washington in a letter dated December 20, 1777. Disagreement arose as to the exact lay-out of the works as well as to the situation itself, but finally Gen. Putnam and a committee of the Convention decided on January 14, 1778, "that the most proper place to obstruct the navigation of the river is at West Point." Putnam's decided opinion was thus sustained, and a week later Parsons's brigade crossed from the east side of the Hudson, and in spite of the severity of the weather, began the erection of the works agreed upon. It was on or about January 25, 1778, that the sounds of pick and shovel were first heard on that famous site as the work began of making it the invincible fortress which played so prominent a part in the military operations that were to follow.[1]

As Major Humphreys was present with his brigade and conversant with the facts in the case, his account of the transactions and events of that date is especially interesting and important. In his *Life of Putnam*, he continues:

> Late in the year we left the lines and repaired to the Highlands. For upon the loss of Fort Montgomery, the Commander-in-Chief determined to build another fortification for the defence of the river. His Excellency, accordingly, wrote to General Putnam to fix upon the spot. After reconnoitering all the different places proposed and revolving in his own mind their relative advantages for offence on the water and defence

[1] See Boynton's *West Point*, pp. 48–68.

on the land, he fixed upon WEST POINT. It is no vulgar phrase to say that to him belongs the glory of having chosen this rock of our military salvation. The position for water batteries which might sweep the channel where the river formed a right angle, made it the most proper of any for commanding the navigation; while the rocky ridges that rose in awful sublimity behind each other, rendered it impregnable and even incapable of being invested by less than twenty thousand men. The British, who considered this post as a sort of American Gibralter, never attemping it but by the treachery of an American officer. All the world knows that this project failed, and that West Point continues to be the receptacle of everything valuable in military preparations to the present day.

In the month of January 1778, when a snow two feet deep lay on the earth, Gen. Parsons' Brigade went to West Point and broke ground. Want of covering for the troops, together with want of tools and material for the works made the prospect truly gloomy and discouraging. It was necessary that means should be found though our currency was depreciated and our treasury exhausted. The estimates and requisitions of Colonel la Radiere, the Engineer who laid out the works altogether disproportioned to our circumstances served only to put us in mind of our poverty, and, as it were to satirize our resources. His petulant behaviour and unaccommodating disposition added further embarrassments. It was then that the patriotism of Governor Clinton shone in full lustre. His exertions to furnish supplies can never be too much commended. His influence, arising from his popularity was unlimited: yet he hesitated not to put all his popularity at risque, whenever the federal interests demanded. Notwithstanding the impediments that opposed our progress, with his aid before the opening of the campaign, the works were in great forwardness.[1]

After the works had been partially completed, Gen. Parsons' Brigade seems to have remained on garrison

[1] Humphreys' *Life of Gen. Putnam*, pp. 176, 177.

duty at West Point when Gen. Putnam was obliged to return to Connecticut. Gen. McDougall was put temporarily in charge of the Highland forts. The headquarters for Gen. Parsons were established at the house of Col. Beverly Robinson. Col. Robinson's daughters and one or two other young ladies in the Highlands formed an agreeable "Tory circle" where young American officers occasionally passed an afternoon in chat and repartee. One brisk day in November previous, Major Humphreys and Colonel Samuel B. Webb diverted themselves with a trip up the Hudson to take tea with "the Misses Robinson," and enjoy a ride back together to Camp. Their comrade of the "Seventy-Six Campaign," Benjamin Tallmadge, would have made a sympathetic companion, but just then, as a full-blossomed Major of Dragoons on Washington's picket lines outside of Valley Forge, he was on duty. There was left only the consolation of letters. To Webb he wrote November 17, 1777: "If my old friend David Humphreys is with you, give him also the benedictions of your friend and humble servant, Benj. Tallmadge."[1]

The house of Col. Beverly Robinson was upon a broad plateau at the base of Sugar Loaf Mountain, opposite West Point. The house commanded an extensive and entrancing view of river, forest, and mountain. Col. Robinson himself was a Loyalist, and as Major had served with Wolfe at Quebec. He married a daughter of Frederick Philipse, the second Lord of the Philipse Manor.

Hoping to remain in contented ease in his Highland home he took no part in the preliminaries to the Revolution. But when the War actually began he removed to New York and organized the Loyal American regiment, of which he became Colonel and his son Beverly Robinson, Jr., Lieutenant-Colonel. After the Revolution, with a

[1] *Correspondence of Col. S. B. Webb*, by Worthington Ford, vol. ii.

portion of his family, he went to England, and died at Thornbury in 1792, in his seventieth year.[1]

Gen. Parsons, in a letter to his friend, Gen. James Wadsworth of Hartford, written in February, 1778, says, of the life led at the Point:

> You ask me where I can be found. This is a puzzling question, the camp is at a place on Hudson's River called West Point opposite where Fort Constitution once stood. The situation is pass'd description .... To a contemplative mind which delights in a lonely retreat from the world to view and admire the stupendous work of nature, it is as beautiful as Sharon but affords to a man who loves the society of the world a prospect nearly allied to the Shades of Death; here I am to be found at present in what situation of mind you will easily imagine. Mr. Dwight and Major Humphreys are now here, and a good companion now and then adds to the number of my agreeable family.[2]

It was about this time that it was ascertained in the camp that a large British man-of-war was aground near Smithtown, Long Island. With a selected company of thirty men Major Humphreys crossed the Sound to destroy it. Much to his disappointment the vessel had been floated the day before their arrival. Other British vessels were found anchored there which they surprised. After burning a brig, schooner, and sloop, the expedition returned to camp without loss.[3]

The Rev. Dr. Timothy Dwight, revisiting the scene of his early youth when he had become a well-known scholar, and President of Yale College, recalls this incident of his

[1] Benson J. Lossing's *Field Book of the American Revolution*, New York, p. 140.

[2] Professor Henry B. Johnston's *Yale and her Honour Roll in the American Revolution, 1775-1783*, p. 259, New York, Privately printed, 1888.

[3] Johnston's *Yale in the Revolution*, p. 272.

army chaplaincy, which had probably been obtained for him by Major Humphreys[1]:

The headquarters of a commanding officer are of necessity a scene of bustle and business. Such at that time was particularly the case with ours. On the 15th of March, which was Sunday, we attended Divine service in the morning. After it was ended, the house was filled with a succession of officers, and others, who came in to receive orders, or to report the manner in which they had executed those they had already received. To withdraw ourselves from such a scene of confusion, Major Humphreys, an intimate friend of mine, from the time we were fellow-students at Yale College and myself, determined to seek the only retreat in our power; a solitary walk. Accordingly we wandered to the top of Sugar-Loaf; a mountain of considerable height, at a small distance to the South from Col. Robinson's. These observations will introduce with a sufficient explicitness the following letter, from which you will derive a more distinct view of the appearance of the most interesting part of the highlands than I can give you in any other manner.

"Yesterday afternoon in company with Major Humphreys I went up to the summit of Sugar Loaf, a mountain near Col. Robinson's house. We ascended it with some difficulty, from the steepness of the acclivity, and from the loose stones which frequently sliding from under our feet; exposed us to imminent hazard of falling. From the summit we were presented with an extensive and interesting prospect, comprising the objects which I have heretofore mentioned, and many others, which I had never seen. The point of view was remarkably happy: the mountain being so situated as to bring within our reach the greatest number of objects in the surrounding region, and exhibit them with the highest advantage. What is almost a singularity, there was not a cheerful object in our horizon. Everything which we beheld, was majestic, solemn, wild and melancholy."[2]

[1] He was in the army from October, 1777, to October, 1778.

[2] *Travels in New-England and New-York;* by Timothy Dwight, S.T.D.,

During the Spring and early Summer of 1778 the Brigade of Gen. Parsons remained in the Highlands. In the meantime Washington with the main body of the army had left the dreary winter quarters at Valley Forge where so much suffering had been endured and so much heroism displayed.

Sir William Howe had resigned his command, and the British troops under Sir Henry Clinton, their new chief, had evacuated Philadelphia, and intended to force a passage through Washington's army to New York. Proclamations of bills of Amnesty and Conciliation passed by the English Parliament were promulgated by agents of the Crown, and in June, 1778, three Commissioners to treat with the Americans for conciliation and a return to their allegiance arrived at Philadelphia, who were received with scant courtesy by the military authorities. There was no consideration of their proposals by the Continental Congress.

On June 19, 1778, the bloody battle of Monmouth was fought with much courage and skill both on the part of Clinton and Washington. The disobedience of orders by General Charles Lee made it very near a fatal disaster for the Continental Army.

While Washington was encamped at Paramus, New Jersey, he received the welcome news that a fleet under the command of Count d'Estaing had arrived off the coast with instructions to render all possible assistance to the Americans.

This was the first result of the treaty of alliance finally negotiated with "his most Christian Majesty, Louis XVI.," by the American Commissioners to France in February, 1778. This fleet was composed of twelve ships of the line

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LL.D., Late President of Yale College; Author of Theology Explained and Defended, in Four Volumes. New Haven: Printed by Timothy Dwight. S. Converse, Printer, 1811, vol. iii., p. 430.

and six frigates, and brought a body of four thousand troops. Its arrival in connection with the partial victory at Monmouth made the prospects of the success of the American arms much brighter and cheered the desponding spirits of the people. Washington with the army pushed out through New Jersey and crossing the Hudson made a camp near White Plains, which he occupied during the summer, carefully watching the movements of the enemy, and meditating an attack on New York or in some other quarter as those might suggest. The greater portion of the troops in the Highlands were now concentrated in the new White Plains Camp. Gen. Putnam was given "command of the right Wing of the Grand Army under the Orders of the General in Chief."[1]

All writers upon the Revolution note that the effective strength of the army was at this time about equal to that of the British.[2]

Major Humphreys says:

> Our effective force in one camp was at no other time so respectable as at this juncture. The army consisted of sixty regular Regiments of foot formed into fifteen Brigades, four Battalions of Artillery, four Regiments of Horse, and several Corps of State Troops.[3]

Our soldier during the summer took his turn as "Brigade Major for the Day" in that camp. After the unsuccessful attempt to gain Rhode Island by siege with a combination of New England troops under Gen. Sullivan and Gen. Greene, the French Allies and the French fleet in August, and some skirmishing in various places, the American army went into Winter quarters late in the Fall of 1778. A considerable portion of the British army had been

[1] Humphreys' *Life of Gen. Putnam*, Edition of 1788, p. 178.
[2] Marshall's *Washington*, iii., p. 452, note 2.
[3] *Life of Gen. Putnam*, Edition of 1788, p. 178.

withdrawn to the West Indies with the greater portion of the fleet, but a sufficient number of soldiers to defend New York and a few vessels remained. It was thought advisable by Washington to extend the winter quarters from Redding in Connecticut to Middlebrook in New Jersey nearly upon a line with West Point. The central body was stationed at Middlebrook where Washington, Greene, Knox and Baron Steuben had their headquarters. General McDougall still commanded in the Highlands and in his vicinity were several brigades. Gen. Putnam with the two Brigades of Connecticut, General Poor's New Hampshire Brigade, Col. Sheldon's cavalry and Col. Hazen's Infantry Corps were stationed on Redding Ridge near Danbury, Connecticut. It is said upon good local authority that there were "three separate Camps about half a mile apart."

The position of the Campo [says Judge Pickett, whose grandfather was quartered there], on the easterly slope of a lofty hill, known as Gallows Hill, was wisely chosen, as it afforded some shelter from the northerly and westerly winds, was well provided with wood and water, and from the crest of the hill the shore of Long Island Sound and a wide section of country that then required protection was in view. The camp-ground is located about seventeen miles north of Long Island Sound, twelve miles easterly from the New York State line and twenty seven miles south-easterly from West Point.[1]

Gen. Putnam established his headquarters in an ancient "lean to" house on the Norwalk and Danbury road about three miles west of the Congregational Church at Redding. With him was Major Humphreys who had been appointed one of his aides-de-camp, under the following order of

[1] The Hon. R. S. Pickett, Flag-Day Oration, June 14, 1892, before the Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, for 1893 and 1894, printed for the Society, 1894, p. 450.

December 17, 1778: "David Humphreys Esq. late Brigade Major to General Parsons is appointed Aid-de-Camp to Major General Putnam till further orders and is to be regarded and obeyed as such."[1]

The soldiers, as in previous winters, built for themselves log huts with rude stone foundations. The incidents of camp life were few. There was intense cold and some scarcity of provisions. The raids and requisitions on the poultry yards and cattle of farmers in the vicinity were frequent. Even the cows were milked by the soldiers in the absence of the farmers. The clothing of the troops needed replenishing and both the State and Congressional treasuries were without funds for the purpose. The General and his aides did all that was possible for the comfort of the soldiers. Governor Trumbull was constant in his endeavours to mitigate the evil effects of an empty treasury and the slow process by which money for the support of the Continental troops in the camp was obtained by him. This camp has often been called "the Valley Forge of Connecticut." So destitute were some of the soldiers, it is said, that they "were reduced to blankets alone, for clothing by day and covering by night." While the courage of the greater number did not fail and they bravely endured all their privations, others began to clamour for their delayed pay, suitable clothing, and sufficient food. The Continental currency in which the soldiers were paid was then undergoing a rapid depreciation which was an additional cause of discontent. At length the conditions of camp life became so intolerable that open mutiny broke out.

The troops [says Major Humphreys], who had been badly fed, badly cloathed, and worse paid, by brooding over their grievances in the leisure and inactivity of winter-quarters began

[1] Hall's *Life of Parsons*, p. 205.

to think them intolerable. The Connecticut Brigade formed the design of marching to Hartford, where the General Assembly was then in Session, and of demanding redress at the point of the Bayonet. Word having been brought to Gen. Putnam that the second Brigade was under arms for this purpose, he mounted his horse, and galloped to the Cantonment and thus addressed them: "My brave lads, whither are you going? Do you intend to desert your officers, and to invite the enemy to follow you into the country? Whose cause have you been fighting and suffering so long in, is it not your own? Have you no property, no parents, wives or children? You have behaved like men so far—all the world is full of your praises—and posterity will stand astonished at your deeds: but not if you spoil all at last. Don't you consider how much the country is distressed by the war, and that your officers have not been any better paid than yourselves? But we all expect better times and that the Country will do us ample justice. Let us stand by one another then, and fight it out like brave Soldiers. Think what a shame it would be for Connecticutmen to run away from their Officers."

After the several Regiments had received the General as he rode along the line with *drums beating and presented arms*, the Sergeants who had then the command brought the men *to an Order*, in which position they continued while he was speaking. When he had done, he directed the acting Major of Brigade to give the word for them to shoulder, march to their Regimental Parades, and lodge arms. All which they executed with promptitude and apparent good humour. One Soldier only, who had been the most active, was confined in the quarter-guards; from whence at night, he attempted to make his escape. But the sentinel, who had also been in the mutiny, shot him dead on the spot, and thus the affair subsided.[1]

In addition to the defence of Connecticut from invasion Gen. Putnam by frequent scouting parties had constantly to be on the alert for any attempt by the British to gain

[1] *Life of General Putnam*, Edition of 1788, pp. 179, 180.

a foothold on the Hudson. Gen. Washington, after the destruction of the Highland forts, had caused a small fort to be erected at Verplanck's Point on the west side of the river and nearly opposite, eight miles below Peekskill, and a stronger one at Stony Point. This promontory presented an almost bare face of rock to the river, and was difficult of approach from the rear. Small garrisons were left in them to guard the approach to the Highlands. Rumours of a general attack, pillage and burning of the Connecticut shore towns were constantly received from sympathizers in England and France. The greater portion of the winter had passed without any hostile alarm. Late in February, 1779, as Gen. Putnam was making an inspection of the outpost at Horse Neck (now West Greenwich), where he was the guest of Gen. Ebenezer Mead, he saw as he was shaving on the morning of February 26th, upon the surface of his shaving glass "the reflection of a body of red-coats marching up the road from westward." Hastily dropping his razor, putting on his coat, seizing his sword and belt, he immediately went to rally his men, and place his two small field-pieces upon the brow of the hill near the Congregational Church. The British troops were a raiding party of fifteen hundred regulars and Hessians under the command of Gen. Tryon. It was their object to destroy the salt-works at Horse Neck Landing. The story of the skirmish is best told in Humphreys' words:

While Gen. Putnam was on a visit to his out-post at Horse-Neck, he found Governor Tryon advancing upon that town with a corps of fifteen hundred men—to oppose these General Putnam had only a Picket of one hundred and fifty men, and two iron field-pieces without horses or drag-ropes. He, however, planted his cannon on the high ground by the meeting-house, and retarded their approach by firing several times, until perceiving the horse (supported by the infantry) about to charge, he ordered the picket to provide for their safety by

retiring to a swamp inaccessible to horse; and secured his own by plunging down the steep precipice at the church upon a full trot. This precipice is so steep, where he descended, as to have artificial stairs composed of nearly one hundred stone steps for the accommodation of foot passengers. There the Dragoons who were but a sword's length from him, stopped short. For the declivity was so abrupt that they ventured not to follow: and, before they could gain the valley by going round the brow of the hill in the ordinary road, he was far enough beyond their reach. He continued his route unmolested to Stamford, from whence, having strengthened his picket by the junction of some militia, he came back again, and in turn pursued Governor Tryon in his retreat. As he rode down the precipice one ball of the many fired at him went through his beaver. But Governor Tryon, by way of compensating for spoiling his hat, sent him soon afterwards, as a present, a complete suit of cloaths.[1]

Gen. Tryon accomplished his purpose, plundered the people of the town, and injured the houses of many "Whigs."

Mr. Benson J. Lossing, who examined and sketched in 1848 the site of Putnam's descent, says in his *Field Book of the American Revolution*[2]:

General Mead and others saw the descent of Putnam. He wheeled his horse from the road near the house of Dr. Mead, seen on the extreme right. He did not go down the steps at all, (as popular tradition avers,) except four or five of them near the bottom. As he hastened by toward Stamford, General Mead distinctly heard him cursing the British whom he had left behind. The feat was perilous but under the circumstances not very extraordinary. I was told that in 1825 several of the dragoons in the escort of La Fayette to this place performed the same.

The camp on Redding Ridge was broken up on May 27, 1779, when the Commander issued this farewell order:

[1] *Life of General Putnam*, pp. 181, 182. [2] Vol. i., p. 413.

Major General Putnam being about to take command of one of the wings of the Grand Army, before he leaves the troops who have served under him the Winter past thinks it his duty to signify to them his entire approbation of their regular and soldierlike conduct, and wishes them (wherever they may happen to be out) a successful and glorious campaign.[1]

[1] *Record of Connecticut Men in the Revolution*, Hartford, 1889.

CHAPTER VIII

Fairfield and Stony Point

The Camp at Smith's Clove—Clinton Captures Stony Point—Tryon's Raid on New Haven and Fairfield—Humphreys' Elegy on Burning of Fairfield—Wayne's Re-capture of Stony Point—Steuben's Opinion of West Point as a Fort—Headquarters Established at Morristown—Humphreys visits his Home at Derby—Putnam Seized with Paralysis on his Way to Morristown.

ALL through the struggle Washington jealously guarded the Hudson. With the opening of the campaign of 1779 he aimed to prevent Sir Henry Clinton from obtaining control of any important point on the river. To effect this purpose General Putnam with his brigade was ordered to the lower Highlands, where a camp was established near Smith's Clove, a mountain pass in the rear of Haverstraw. Washington transferred the main army slowly, brigade by brigade, to positions on the east and west sides of the Hudson in the vicinity of West Point until the Continental Camp formed a strong guard for that post, and with the reinforcements for the garrison made its retention by the Americans certain.[1]

[1] In the final disposition of the army in the Highlands for the summer of 1779, Gen. Putnam had command of the right wing in which there were the Virginia, New York and Pennsylvania "lines" under Gens. Stirling, De Kalb and St. Clair. "In Smith's Clove and at the furnace," says Professor Johnston, "they guarded the roads leading to the rear of the Point." Col.

Clinton challenged Washington's claim from his temporary headquarters at Phillipsburg, now Yonkers, and in May sent an expedition up the river, leaving the large division of the army under Gen. Vaughan, with Gen. Matthews and his troops from Virginia under the convoy of Sir George Collier to follow. By a masterly management of his forces, Gen. Vaughan landed at Teller's Point, seven miles below Verplanck's Point, and proceeded by land to the rear of the American Fort Fayette. Sir Henry himself, with Gen. Patterson in immediate command, landed three miles below Stony Point on the west side and took by surprise the American detachment engaged upon the works which were at once abandoned. Gen. Patterson planted his guns during the night upon the summit of the Point in the unfinished works and at five o'clock in the morning opened fire upon Fort Fayette on the opposite bank. Soon after Gen. Vaughan arrived in the rear of the Fort and captured it. It was a surprise to Washington that Sir Henry Clinton did not pursue his advantage after finishing the works at Stony Point, and placing a garrison of seven hundred men there and a smaller force at Fort Fayette, but returned to his encampment on Manhattan Island near Harlem. Washington was then apprehensive that some predatory excursion was contemplated and sent messengers to Lebanon to warn the Governor of Connecticut, as soon as he learned that the British fleet had entered Long Island Sound and was stationed off Huntington. The delay of the messengers was unavoidable and their arrival too late to serve the purpose of preparations for defence of the Connecticut shore towns. The militia had, however, been put under arms by order

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Humphreys in his "Life" speaks of Gen. Putnam as being in command of the Maryland line "at Buttermilk Falls two miles below the Point." It is probable that he established his headquarters at the Falls, which would justify the statement.

of the vigilant Governor and every precaution taken against a surprise. Two objects seem to have been designed by the attack upon Connecticut: one to draw Washington from the natural protection of the Highlands of New York to the more level region of Connecticut, where the British would be at a greater advantage; the other to chastise the State for her constant readiness to furnish supplies, money and men for the Continental Army, and thus by an exhibition of British power terrify the people into submission. The invasion of Connecticut was conducted by Gen. Tryon, as usual, with General Garth as second in command.

As soon as Washington knew of it, he sent Heath with the Connecticut division towards the threatened points while Parsons pushed in advance with a small party, to aid the State Militia and report the enemy's movements. It was about five o'clock on the morning of Monday, July 5, 1779, when a division of the combined British and Hessian forces under Gen. Garth landed at West Haven near Savin Rock and proceeded to the Meeting House Green. About the same time the division of Gen. Tryon landed at Five Mile Point, near the present Light House at the east projection of the Harbour. President Stiles, who gives an interesting account of the invasion, estimated the whole body of troops at two thousand, while the official report of Sir George Collier, the British Commodore, says that there were twenty-six hundred. Garth's force was met by the militia under Col. Sabin at West Bridge, with two pieces of artillery. Capt. Hillhouse with a small force of young men, so harassed the advance guard that it was compelled to seek refuge with the main body. The militia were cool and collected and the resistance was determined. Among the volunteers was a company of Yale students under the command of George Welles of the Senior class. It is a matter of local pride and tradition

that the retired President of Yale, the Rev. Dr. Napthali Daggett, who was making a horseback reconnoissance alone near the second milestone from the city, withstood bravely a party of the British until taken prisoner by it. He was treated with much indignity and painfully wounded on the march into New Haven where he was released. The enemy entered the city just after noon; there was a general pillaging of valuable articles, wanton destruction of others, insult and injury to women and children, actual conflict with inoffensive citizens. A few houses were burned, including the handsome mansion of Mr. Morris at the Cove. Throughout the day many collisions occurred between the British and the various bodies of militia. During the night intoxication added to the fury and rage of the British soldiers. About five o'clock on the morning of July 6th, after setting fire to houses in East Haven and to the stores upon Long Wharf, and the vessels stationed there, the soldiers retired to their ships; the galleys still pouring shot and shell into the town, which was continued during the day after the arrival of four regiments of the Connecticut militia that had been summoned to repel the invaders. Late at night the fleet and transports left the harbour.[1]

Upon the morning of Wednesday, July 7th, the fleet anchored off Fairfield and about four o'clock in the afternoon Gen. Tryon and his men entered the town, landing "a little east of Kensie's Point at a place called the Pines." At five o'clock the whole force of the invaders paraded on the Green in front of the Meeting House. Gen. Tryon took for his headquarters the house of Mr. Benjamin Bulkley on the opposite side of the Green, from which

[1] The most valuable contemporary account may be found in President Stiles's *Literary Diary*, vol. ii., pp. 351–367. An exhaustive modern account was issued by Charles Henry Townsend of New Haven in 1879, with the title: *The British Invasion of New Haven, Connecticut.*

he issued his orders to the small detachment sent to plunder and burn. The militia offered a gallant resistance to the enemy. Lieut. Isaac Jarvis with twenty-three men in the fort upon Clover Hill did effective execution with his small company upon various parties of the British, and although a galley was sent to silence its guns and several parties tried to take it by assault he held it throughout the raid. Col. Whiting gathered volunteers upon Round Hill, and Capt. Thomas Nash with a small company attacked from behind fences the marauding bands, killing a few.

Cool courage was displayed by many women as well as men. Mrs. Esther Jennings removed to Greenfield Hill all the cattle near McKenzie's Point. Many women and children were placed in safe hiding places on that hill and in the Fairfield Woods. Enough, however, remained in the village to be the victims of insults, injury and wanton cruelty. The written protection of Gov. Tryon was not respected by the men sent to burn the houses. There was an indiscriminate plundering and burning of the buildings of both Whigs and Tories; even the Rev. John Sayre, minister of Trinity Church, an outspoken Tory, was not protected in his property rights. The church, the parsonage, his books and furniture shared in the general conflagration of the town. About five o'clock on the afternoon of July 8th, soon after the first house was set on fire, a "flag" was sent to Col. Whiting from Gen. Tryon with the address which had recently appeared in the *Courant* calling upon the militia and people to return to their allegiance.

The Colonel sent back this spirited message: "Connecticut having nobly dared to take up arms against the cruel despotism of Britain and the flames having preceded their answer to your flag, they will persist to oppose to the utmost the power exerted against injured innocence."

The night was made by the British soldiers one of revelry and carousing. When the detachment sent to destroy the neighbouring hamlet of Green's Farms came back in the morning, all marched from the desolate town and returned to the fleet which set sail for Huntington. Among the ninety-seven houses burned was that of the Rev. Samuel Mills, a Baptist minister, who had married Sarah Humphreys, the only sister of Col. Humphreys. It is a family tradition that Mrs. Mills hastily gathered a few valuables, placed her best feather bed upon the family horse for a saddle and sought safety by briskly trotting her steed to her father's parsonage in Derby thirty miles away.

The burning of this beautiful village and the wanton attack upon New Haven alarmed the people of the shore towns, but did not increase their regard for the British Crown and its servants. Two hundred and eighteen buildings were destroyed including the court-house, jail, three churches, two schools, ninety-seven dwellings, sixty-seven barns, forty-eight stores and shops.[1]

The British continued their terrible demonstration of power by the burning of Norwalk on July 11th. Gen. Parsons arrived at Norwalk on the 12th and assisted in repelling the invaders. It was here, to use his words, that Gen. Tryon "crowned himself with laurels from

[1] The most authentic accounts of the burning of Fairfield are: *Diary of President Stiles*, vol. ii., pp. 357–359; J. W. Barber's *Historical Collections of Connecticut*, pp. 351, 352, 354, 355, 358, 360. A later account will be found in the Rev. Dr. E. G. Rankin's "Centennial Commemoration, 1879," as printed in the *History of Fairfield County*, pp. 281, *et seq.* The important letter of the Rev. Andrew Eliot, Congregational minister at Fairfield in 1779, appears in the Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, volume iii., pp. 283, 284. The Rev. John Sayre, in a letter describing his treatment by the Whigs during the years 1775–1779, written to the Venerable Propagation Society from "Flushing, Long Island, Nov. 8, 1779," gives a brief notice of the burning of the town: *Connecticut Church Documents*, vol. ii., p. 208, Hawks and Perry, New York, 1864.

another fiery expedition to wreak his master's vengeance upon the rebellious women and formidable hosts of boys and girls.[1]

One of Col. Humphreys' earliest published poems was written upon the site of Fairfield a few months after the sad tragedy. It elicited great applause on its first issue and has been incorporated into the historical accounts of that July day, by several writers.[2]

ELEGY

on the

BURNING OF *FAIRFIELD* IN CONNECTICUT

Ye smoking ruins, marks of hostile ire,
Ye ashes warm, which drink the tears that flow,
Ye desolated plains, my voice inspire,
And give soft music to the song of woe.

How pleasant, Fairfield, on th' enraptur'd sight
Rose thy tall spires, and op'd thy social halls!
How oft my bosom beat with pure delight,
At yonder spot where stand thy darken'd walls!

But there the voice of mirth resounds no more,
A silent sadness through the streets prevails:
The distant main alone is heard to roar,
And hollow chimneys hum with sullen gales—

Save where scorch'd elms th' untimely foliage shed,
Which, rustling, hovers round the faded green—
Save where at twilight, mourners frequent tread,
'Mid recent graves o'er desolation's scene.

[1] Stuart's *Life of Governor Jonathan Trumbull*, p. 444.

[2] Lossing's *Field Book of the Revolution*, pp. 427, 428. Barber's *Historical Collections*, vol. i., p. 335.

How chang'd the blissful prospect, when compar'd
These glooms funereal, with thy former bloom,
Thy hospitable rights when Tryon shar'd,
Long ere he seal'd thy melancholy doom:

That impious wretch, with coward voice decreed
Defenceless domes and hallow'd fanes to dust;
Beheld, with sneering smile, the wounded bleed,
And spurr'd his bands to rapine, blood and lust.

Vain was the widow's, vain the orphan's cry,
To touch his feelings, or to soothe his rage—
Vain the fair drop that roll'd from beauty's eye,
Vain the dumb grief of supplicating age.

Could Tryon hope to quench the patriot flame,
Or make his deeds survive in glory's page?
Could Britons seek of savages the fame,
Or deem it conquest, thus the war to wage:

Yes, Britons: scorn the councils of the skies,
Extend wide Havock, spurn th' insulted foes;
Th' insulted foes to tenfold vengeance rise,
Resistance growing as the danger grows.

Red in their wounds, and pointing to the plain,
The visionary shapes before me stand—
The thunder bursts, the battle burns again,
And killing fires encrimson all the strand.

Long dusky wreaths of smoke, reluctant driv'n,
In black'ning volumes o'er the landscape bend:
Here the broad splendour blazes high to heav'n,
There umber'd streams in purple pomp ascend.

In fiery eddies, round the tott'ring walls,
Emitting sparks, the lighter fragments fly;
With frightful crash the burning mansion falls,
The works of years in glowing embers lie.

Tryon, behold thy sanguine flames aspire,
Clouds ting'd with dyes intolerably bright;
Behold, well pleased, the village wrapt in fire,
Let one wide ruin glut thy ravish'd sight!

E'er fades the grateful scene, indulge thine eye,
See age and sickness, tremulously slow,
Creep from the flames—see babes in torture die,
And mothers swoon in agonies of woe.

Go, gaze, enraptur'd with the mother's tear,
The infant's terror, and the captive's pain,
Where no bold bands can check thy curst career;
Mix fire with blood on each unguarded plain!

These be thy triumphs! this thy boasted fame!
Daughters of mem'ry, raise the deathless song!
Repeat through endless years his hated name,
Embalm his crimes, and teach the world our wrongs.[1]

The ruins of Fairfield and Norwalk were still smouldering when the spirits of the patriots were revived by the brilliant exploit of Anthony Wayne, the storming and capture of Stony Point. This expedition had been carefully planned by Gen. Washington to demonstrate to the British Commander that the control of the Hudson was to be in the hands of the Americans. He selected for its leader a general whose courage had been fully proved, whose judgment was sound, whose military skill was pre-eminent and who for daring has been called "Mad Anthony Wayne."

When the project was laid before him by the Commander-in-Chief he accepted the perilous task with

[1] A letter to Gen. Greene, dated New Haven, the 10th of April, 1780, states that the poem was written "to while away a vacant hour the other morning." A note in Col. Humphreys' *Miscellaneous Works, 1804*, says it was written in 1779 on the spot where the town stood.

modest confidence. The fifteen hundred men necessary for this enterprise were chosen by General Wayne with great care, from the forty-six battalions in the portion of the Continental Army quartered around West Point. A new corps was formed, to be known as the Light Infantry; it was essential that each man in it should be perfect in drill, understand the use of the bayonet, be able to make forced marches, and take any risk. It was to consist of four regiments, each to contain three hundred and forty men and officers. The first was commanded by Col. Christian Febiger, a wealthy Dane, who had come to America in 1774 as a merchant, became a volunteer at Bunker Hill, and then entered the army. His endurance and bravery had been tested at Quebec and on other battlefields. His battalion commanders were Lieut. Col. Fleury, a gallant young Frenchman, and Major Posey, a valiant Virginian. Col. Richard Butler, who is styled by a recent historian "the ablest, bravest and most reliable field-officer of the Pennsylvania line,"[1] was placed in charge of the second regiment, under whom were Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Hay, a favourite officer of General Wayne, whose men were principally from Pennsylvania, and the dashing Jack Stewart of Baltimore whose detachment was composed of soldiers in the Maryland Line, with some from Delaware. The third regiment was under Col. Return Jonathan Meigs, with Lieutenant-Colonel Isaac Sherman, a son of Roger Sherman, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and Capt. Henry Champion as battalion chiefs. The officers and men were all veterans from Connecticut. Major Humphreys does not appear to have taken part in the expedition, but was doubtless active, as Putnam's aide, in preparing against a possible counter-attack by the enemy. The fourth regiment was not at this time fully organized. Col. William Hull with Major Murfree, of

[1] Prof. Henry P. Johnston, *The Storming of Stony Point.*

North Carolina, joined Gen. Wayne's force, with the Massachusetts companies, as the nucleus of the regiment. There were no men from New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire, or Rhode Island, as those lines were then engaged in the expedition against the New York Indians under Gen. Sullivan.

At noon, July 15, 1779, the Light Infantry assembled for inspection at Sandy Beach, five miles below West Point, and two miles above Fort Montgomery. Thirteen hundred and fifty men, determined and eager for any enterprise, were drawn up for the first time before their commander. Immediately after inspection the line of march was taken up. It led them by the bases of high hills, through morasses, and over rough roads. Torn Mountain and Bear Mountain were passed early in the afternoon, and the soldiers proceeded during the remainder of the long July day in such order as they could preserve. They surmounted the crest of "De Gaffles Rugh"; crossed the western slope of Dunderberg, and at eight o'clock in the evening halted for a rest on the farm of David Springsteel, thirteen miles from their camp and one mile and a half directly in the rear of Stony Point. It was not until then that the men knew their destination which had been kept a profound secret even from the sentries and outposts. The attack was planned for midnight, and the troops gained a short respite from toil while the final arrangements were made. At half-past eleven in profound silence the Light Infantry advanced in two columns. Colonels Febiger and Meigs, and Major Hull with their troops were on the right, Col. Butler on the left. Major Murfree with two companions with loaded guns formed the centre. Each man carried his musket unloaded and with fixed bayonet. The officers carried espontoons, a species of spear. For the right column there was a vanguard of one hundred and

fifty volunteers, and for the left of one hundred. They were armed with axes to cut away the abattis and other obstructions. Their muskets were slung. For each division in front of the vanguard in the post of greatest danger were twenty intrepid men to play the part of "the forlorn hope." Lieut. Gibbon led the left and Lieut. Knox the right. Almost noiselessly the soldiers advanced toward the Point, the column under Gen. Wayne through the present village, and that of Col. Butler through "a farm-lane now a road," and at midnight were on opposite sides of the marsh between the Point and the mainland. The water in the inlet was found to be deeper than had been supposed but it was no obstacle to these men of pluck and muscle.

In they waded boldly, and although at times the water was waist deep, they advanced rapidly even under the fire that was kept up by the sentinels and garrison who had now discovered the attacking party. Led by Col. Fleury and Lieut. Knox, the column rapidly scaled the heights, charging with bayonets, grappling sometimes with those who made a determined resistance, in spite of the incessant fire which was kept up. The artillery men had now manned the batteries and hoped to pour such a deadly charge into what they thought the large force in front as to defend the fort. Major Murfree with his two companions kept up "a galling fire." Col. Johnson, the British Commandant, supposing that the chief attack was there, gathered a large part of the garrison to resist it, while Col. Butler approaching from the left, with slight opposition broke through the abattis, gained the fortress, and aided his companions in overpowering the garrison. Major Posey with his battalion seized the northern side. Col. Fleury entered the flag bastion without encountering many obstacles and hauled down the British ensign, raising the cry soon echoed by the whole American force: "The

fort's our own." Col. Johnson, who with several companies of his men had descended to the outer redoubt to repel the attack, started back to the citadel "only to fall into the hands of Febiger to whom he surrendered in person." In thirty minutes the action was over, and the cries of the British: "Mercy: Mercy: dear Americans, Quarter: Quarter," ceased. The forbearance of the General and his troops in sparing the lives of the greater part of the garrison has often been noted. It has been one of the unwritten rules of war that putting a garrison to death in a night attack was both justifiable and necessary. No one was killed who was willing to surrender. The British loss was sixty-three killed and more than seventy wounded; the prisoners taken were five hundred and forty-three. On the American side fifteen were killed and eighty-three wounded. Fifteen cannon and a large amount of stores were taken. Gen Wayne briefly announced his success to Washington, by whom the General and his men were heartily thanked in an official Order. This affair changed the plans of Sir Henry Clinton, checked his ravages in Connecticut, and prevented any desire for battle with the army in the Highlands. It still remains one of the most brilliant and daring exploits in military history, and received from both friends and foes applause and commendation. It gained for Gen. Wayne undying fame.[1]

After examining carefully the condition of the works at

[1] The most complete accounts of the Storming of Stony Point are: Prof. Henry P. Johnston's *The Storming of Stony Point on the Hudson, Mid-Night, July 15, 1779. Its Importance in the Light of Unpublished Documents*, 12 mo., p. 232. James M. White & Co., N. Y. 1900. Hon. John Marshall's *Life of George Washington*, vol. iv., pp. 71–81. Washington Irving's *Life of George Washington*, vol. iii., pp. 502–509. Henry B. Dawson's *Battles of the United States*, volume i., p. 517. General John Armstrong's *Life of General Anthony Wayne*, in Sparks's *American Biography*, vol. iv., pp. 44–48.

Stony Point, July 17th, in company with several of his most trusted generals, Washington determined that as it would require a garrison of at least fifteen hundred men, and as Fort Fayette on Verplanck's Point opposite was still held by the enemy, it was inexpedient to retain the post. It was his own opinion, in which the best strategists of the army concurred, that the defence of West Point was the most essential service to the American cause. A Council of officers held at the headquarters of General Putnam on July 22, 1779, at the request of the Commander-in-Chief, at which Gens. Putnam, De Kalb, Smallwood, Muhlenberg and Gist were present, made suggestions as to the arrangement of outposts. The Board did not think any change necessary in the general disposition of the troops in the Highlands.[1]

Baron Steuben as an expert military engineer gave an opinion, as desired by Washington, upon the general military status after the capture of Stony Point, in which he reviewed the situation of the two armies and considered the effect of that victory upon the army and people of the United States, after which he conjectured the probable plans of the enemy and the changes in them which it brought about. His conclusion was that West Point should be strongly fortified, supplied with sufficient artillery, food, and ammunition and garrisoned with two thousand men. "We ought not to be induced," he said, "to take our forces more than a day's march from it."[2]

The conclusions of the Board of officers and of Baron Steuben were approved by the Commander-in-Chief. The northern army still remained on the defensive in its mountain fastnesses. Sir Henry Clinton again occupied Stony Point, strengthened the works, and placed in them

[1] Document No. 51, pp. 209–211 of Appendix of Prof. Johnston's *The Storming of Stony Point.*

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 207–209.

a large body of soldiers. The news from the South was discouraging to the patriots. Gen. Lincoln had planned to besiege and capture Savannah with the aid of the French under Count d'Estaing, who at his solicitation had sailed for the coast of Georgia after a successful engagement with the British fleet in the West Indies. The strength of the fortifications, the readiness of Gen. Prevost, the British Commandant, the reinforcements received by the British and the desire of d'Estaing to return to the West Indies, were obstacles to success. The works were bravely stormed October 9th, with great loss of life and the wounding of many, among them Count d'Estaing, both of the French and Americans. The death of Count Pulaski was a serious blow, for he was brave and devoted to the cause of the Americans. It was the receipt of this intelligence by Sir Henry Clinton, so cheering to his country and the prospect of the reduction of South Carolina, that led him to withdraw the garrisons from the Hudson River to concentrate his forces in New York, and on December 26th, with several thousand men in transports under the convoy of five ships of the line and some frigates under Admiral Arbuthnot, to sail for the South. As soon as Washington knew this design, he detached and sent forward to reinforce Gen. Lincoln all the troops of Virginia and South Carolina then in the Highlands, and proceeded to make arrangements for going into winter quarters. He selected for the main body of the army the strong ground at Morristown, New Jersey, as a suitable place, after surveying several other situations in that State. Gen. Heath was left in command in the Highlands and to protect the Connecticut coast. The cavalry was sent to Connecticut. A portion under Col. Benjamin Tallmadge was encamped at Durham and another portion at Colchester.

It was late in the fall when Gen. Putnam and his military

family left the neighbourhood of West Point to make brief visits at their homes in Connecticut before joining Gen. Washington at Morristown. Col. Humphreys had been absent from Derby nearly two years and to his parents and friends he could tell the many glories and failures of the campaigns in a graphic and entertaining manner. He expected soon to be summoned into active service by his General who was then resting at his farm in Pomfret.

Gen. Putnam commenced his journey from Pomfret to Morristown to join the army in its winter huts late in December, 1779, but the stout old campaigner could not proceed to his destination. His active work was done. His aide-de-camp says,

> Upon the road between Pomfret and Hartford he felt an unusual torpor slowly pervading right hand and foot. This heaviness crept gradually on, until it had deprived him of the use of his limbs on that side in a considerable degree before he reached the house of his friend Colonel Wadsworth. Still he was unwilling to consider his disorder of the paralytic kind and endeavoured to shake it off by exertion. Having found that impossible, a temporary dejection, disguised however under a veil of assumed cheerfulness, succeeded. But reason, philosophy, and religion soon reconciled him to his fate.

The family of Col. Wadsworth in his absence, for he was the Continental Commissary-General and obliged to make many journeys to obtain supplies for the army, cared tenderly for General Putnam.

A letter to Colonel Wadsworth from his friend Mr. John Jeffrey says:

> General Putnam arrived at our house last Friday morning and was seized immediately after his arrival with a fit of the palsey; his first complaint was a numbness of the right hand. In the space of about an hour it reached up to his shoulders.

In the afternoon his right foot and leg was affected, and he was obliged to be carried up to his chamber by two men.[1]

This unexpected event gave to Major Humphreys some months of leisure as his old commander was unable to resume active service in the Army.

With the General's other aide, his son, Major Daniel Putnam, he remained in Connecticut during the winter, visited Boston, transacted some public business, and enjoyed an opportunity to indulge his favourite muse and correspond with fellow-officers in the different camps.

[1] Note to the Address of the Honourable Jonathan F. Morris at the unveiling of a tablet marking the site of the house of Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth, where General Washington was entertained on his first visit to Hartford, June 29, 1775, on p. 56 of *Year Book of the Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution for 1895–1896*.

CHAPTER IX

The Campaign of 1780

Army Songs—Dwight's "Columbia"—Humphreys' Poem to the Armies—"The Elegy" and other Poems—His Dedications to Washington—His Letters to Gen. Greene—The Dark Day in Connecticut—Humphreys Appointed Aide-de-Camp to Washington—His Sonnet to a Young Lady—Offered Place on Staff of Gen. Greene—Humphreys' Description of the Condition of Affairs—The Spring of 1780—Humphreys Joins Gen. Greene at Morristown, June, 1780—Gen. Greene's Character — Landing of British under Knyphausen at Elizabeth Point—Washington Moves his Headquarters to Rockaway—Battle of Springfield—Humphreys' Account of it to Washington—Order of the Day Appointing Humphreys Aide-de-Camp to Washington, June 23, 1780.

HUMPHREYS and a few of his college companions had never ceased to cherish a love of letters even during the darkest scenes of war and misery. They had cheered their soldiers in camp and on the march by stirring patriotic ditties. Any one acquainted in the slightest degree with army life will know the value of singing. It takes the weariness out of the march, inspirits the laggard and encourages all to endure hardships with little complaining. The songs composed by Humphreys and his friends did much to keep up the spirits of the much-tried soldiers of the Continental Army and contributed largely to its ultimate success. They kept alive the enthusiasm of the patriotic and made them look forward to the not far distant time when Columbia should take

her rank among the great nations—free and independent of all transatlantic rule.

It was while in the Highlands with Col. Humphreys in the spring of 1778 that Dr. Timothy Dwight wrote his well-known song, "Columbia: Columbia: to glory arise." It was at the same time that our soldier projected his first extended poem which he addressed to the armies of the United States.

During these months he had the congenial companionship of John Trumbull, the author of the popular seriocomic poem "McFingal," a satire upon the Tories; Joel Barlow, a poetical genius, who was meditating then his famous "Columbia," and others who amused themselves by contests of wit and eloquence in prose and verse.

Col. Humphreys now revised his first draft of the "Poem Addressed to the Armies of the United States," submitted it to the criticism of his literary friends, among whom was Dr. Ezra Stiles, the learned President of Yale College, and prepared it for publication.

In a letter to his friend Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth, of Hartford, written from "New Haven March 30, 1780," he says:

I know you will accuse me of laziness in not forwarding before this time, the piece addressed to the Army. To this accusation, I was prepared to plead not guilty.

But upon considering how difficult it is for people of a certain class, who have fallen under suspicions to vindicate themselves however innocent they may be, and considering moreover what a righteous tribunal I was to be brought before: I have concluded to own "the foul fact like a Christian." I throw myself on the mercy of the court. But in extenuation of the Crime, your Worship will please to be inform'd that the aforesaid poem (so called as the Assembly say of the Tendery Act) has actually been for a considerable time past fairly

written off for the press, with large emendations, corrections and improvements (all which I suppose you will candidly acknowledge would have become the author exceedingly well) and furthermore you must know that the reason it has not been sent was that its length made it improper to be published except in a Pamphlet of a full sheet in which manner it has been propos'd by a number of gentlemen in this Town, to have it print'd here, and nothing but the indolence of the printer can prevent it. I could wish to have it done under my eye. On that account and no other should prefer this place, but as I can't this moment be determined I will write you in a few days more particularly and if you insist upon it you shall have the Copy either in Manuscript or Print.

He appears at this time to have been writing various sonnets, serio-comic poems and playful verses. The only survivals appear to be the "Elegy," the Poem, and "The letter to a young lady in Boston."

In a letter to Gen. Greene, Humphreys dilates in like vein upon his own and other poetic productions, and lets us for a moment into his choice circle at Yale. He is anxious, too, to be in the field again:

NEW HAVEN, 10th April, 1780.

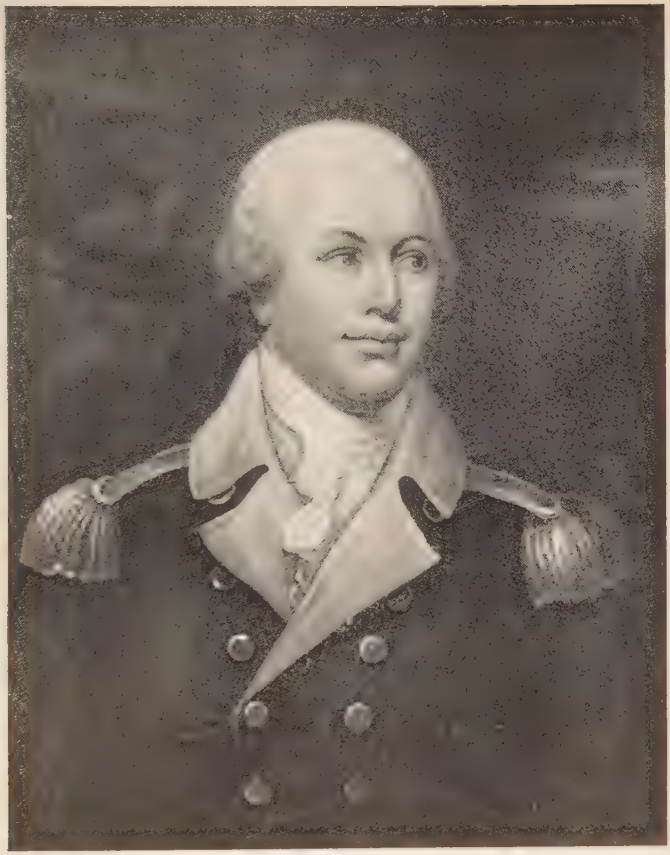
DEAR SIR:

The ill-state of health which has prevented our old friend the General (with whom I had the honor of serving) from returning to Camp; has likewise subjected me, to a state of *inactivity* and *rustication* for several months past; this, I should have little reason to regret, from the manner in which I have spent the time, during the inactive season of the year: but the idea of its being protracted into the active parts of the Campaign might be rather irksome & disagreeable. However, I shall not make myself or friends anxious about my situation, for if my country should have no farther occasion for my services, I shall be perfectly willing to retire, if otherwise I make no doubt of being permitted to serve it, in such a man-

ner as will be most conducive to the public good; which is the utmost limit of my ambition.

In the interim, whilst I am amusing myself with subjects of Literature & Belle Lettres, I have presumed, upon the knowledge of your fondness for Letters, to trouble you with a small specimen of my attempts in Poetry. The Elegy on the burning of Fairfield, which is herewith transmitted was suggested (not inspired according to poetic custom) by a view of the ruins of that once beautiful Town; and was written to indulge a pleasing kind of melancholy, and while away a vacant hour the other morning. Should it afford you a moment's amusement, it will be an additional gratification. And, indeed, since I have proceeded so far in confessing my weaknesses; I may as well go on to acknowledge some other of my poetical sins & in the true style of a Penitent, confess, that being instigated by the Devil & a certain Jere Wadsworth, I have sometime since written & consented to publish a Piece in verse addressed to the Army on the subject of the present war, the prospects before us, and the future felicity, grandeur, population & glory of the Country for which we are now contending. When the aforesaid poem makes its appearance, a Copy of it will not fail of waiting upon you with the writer's sincerest respects; unless you should have a surfeit of the enclosure; which being duly notified, will preclude any future efforts of presumption & vanity from the same quarter.

Now what could induce me to turn Scribbler, whether my own sins or those of my Parents (as Pope says) must be left to further discussion; tho I rather imagine the mischief, like a thousand others, will be found to have originated, in a great measure, from keeping ill Company, such as the before mentioned Col Wadsworth, a certain Mr. Trumbull, a Mr. Dwight, a Dr. Stiles & some other similar Characters of smaller notoriety. These men are enough to corrupt half the youth of the State, and introduce them to the same evil practices. For instance, there is a hopeful Genius of their fostering & cultivation in this town, who is so far gone in Poetry, that there is no hope of reclaiming, & making him attentive to anything else,—to be more serious about the matter. The



Nathl Greene

person intended, is a young gentleman by the name of Barlow; who I could wish was introduced to your notice. He is certainly a very great genius, and has undertaken a work which I am persuaded, will do honor to himself & his Country, if he is enabled to prosecute it, in the manner he has proposed. It is entitled The Vision of Columbus, and in the course of the poem will bring into view upon a larger scale, all the great events that have, or will take place on the continent; From a sight of the first Book which he has nearly finished, I have conceived an exceeding high idea of the performance. But the difficulty is, it will be a labour of three years at least; And his patrimony which consisted in Continental Bills is by no means sufficient to support him. However a number of gentlemen have undertaken to patronize him, & I hope will not relinquish the plan on account of the expense. Should they, he proposes to set out for the southward & see what encouragement he can obtain there.

My friend Trumbull is in Town & informs me that he has had the pleasure of receiving a letter from You; to which he wrote an answer by an Officer who has not yet gone to Camp, and therefore he presumes it will reach you in a very depreciated state; which depreciation, he engages to make good, provided it is not more than forty for one. I shall spend next week with him at Westbury & will put him often in mind of his promise. I have just received a line from Maj Putnam, who acquaints me, that the General is better & proposes making a visit to Camp in May.

I am with great respect & esteem, your most obedt & very hble servant,

David Humphreys.

To Major General Greene.

The "Poem" was finally issued late in the spring of 1780 from the Press of T. and S. Green at New Haven. Col. Humphreys modestly concealed his identity under the appellation: "A Gentleman of the Army." It was received by the reading public with much favour and

enthusiastically read by many officers and soldiers in the army,[1] and French translations of it were made in 1785 and 1786 by the Marquis de Chastelleux, and published in Paris.

An early copy was sent by the author to Washington with this note:

HARTFORD, May 23d, 1780.

SIR:

I have taken the liberty to present Your Excellence, with the Copy of an Address to the Armies under your command, which was begun for my own amusement, compleated with the Design suggested in the introduction, and suffered to be published, on the representation of my friends, that it might in some measure answer so valuable and important a purpose. Should it be so fortunate as to have any effect in the way or afford a moment's amusement, and relaxation to your Excellency, from the incessant and momentous cares which are incident to your elevated station; it will give the most ample satisfaction and pleasure to

Your Excellency's Most Obedient and
Most Humble Servant,
DAVID HUMPHREYS.

HIS EXCELLENCY,
GEN'L WASHINGTON.

In a letter accompanying a copy of the Poem sent to General Greene, Col. Humphreys says:

[1] "A Poem Addressed to the Armies of the United States of American, by a Gentleman of the Army.

Jam fides, et pax, et honor, pudorque
Priscus, et neglecta redire virtus
Audet, apparetque beata pleno
Copia cornu. Horace.

Incipent magni procedere menses. Virgil."

16. mo. p. 16. New Haven: printed by T. and S. Green. MDCCLXXX.

I am now taking the liberty you was pleased to give me of expressing myself still farther, by presenting you with a copy of the address to the Army which I mentioned in my last; all that I could presume to say in its favour, you will find recorded (as the Parsons say by way of introduction) in the Advertisement prefixed to the Poem. So far as an honest intention and a zeal for my country can be urged as an excuse for indifferent poetry I am determined to claim the indulgence of the Public in general and the patronage of my friends in particular. But pray, don't you think I have been guilty of an instance of impertinence, by addressing a Copy of it to his Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief without his permission or knowledge?[1]

Another letter from Humphreys to Gen. Greene, both serious and amusing, has its interest in this connection:

New Haven, May 30th, 1780.

Dear Sir:

I beg pardon for troubling you with another letter upon the back of my last; and scarcely know of any better excuse for it, than the irresistible propensity to have to write to, and about the objects of which I am thinking, continually; Did not your candor and liberality of sentiment & behaviour inspire me with almost unbounded confidence in your friendship, I should not have written with the same freedom I have already done. And, indeed I can hardly tell, what it is except this which now prompts me to unbosom myself with so little reserve. I wish however it may not rather be considered as an argument of my presumption than a proof of my attachment and sincere affection.

The present moment, which is certainly big with great events; appears to me to be the most important as well as the most critical one, that has ever happened, since the commencement of the war. On the one hand, every prospect from

[1] For a comparison of editions, comments and annotations of the "Address" see chapter "Literary Works of Colonel Humphreys," post.

abroad looks exceedingly favourable. And everything, except what depends on ourselves, and our own exertions, wears the most flattering aspect. On the other, the ill-state of our finances, the total want of credit, the impracticability of calling forth the resources of the country in the ordinary mode, the stupidity & negligence of the people at large to their own interest, the knavery of some, and the want of ability in others, who are concerned in the administration of public affairs, and especially the unbounded, uncontrollable spirit of dissipation, licentiousness, & avarice, which predominates through every rank and order of men, so far as they have any opportunity for its gratification; afford the most gloomy presage of what this event would be, if Providence should only leave us to ourselves, or, (as they commonly say) to our own destruction.

In the midst of this embarras'd & distressing state of affairs, when we can neither assemble any considerable force; or support and keep together the shattered remains of the Army now in the field, for want of supplies, while the disposition of the Country is so unfavourable to every exertion; it seems to me that the certain prospect of the immediate arrival of a formidable land and naval armament to cooperate with us, can serve only to augment and increase the perplexity and embarrassment.

Heaven be thanked I am not a General, and never shall be, for my own sake, for that of the Public, 'tis most auspicious that they who have the management of our military affairs, have more ability, fortitude, perseverence and integrity, than ever mortals had before. You will pardon me for the boldness of the assertion, and allow this to be the case with our glorious Commander in Chief, tho you may have more diffidence, and less justice, than posterity will inevitably have in coupling your name with his. Good God what must the feelings of that great & good man be, to find himself so ill seconded by his country at such a crisis.

As to the plan of operations for the campaign, I suppose it is determined upon before this time, and that it will be difficult, if not disgraceful to recede from the measures concerted in conjunction with our allies. So that I presume all that is

now necessary, is for the Country to be roused from its lethargy, to make those great efforts, of which we all believe it is capable,—for my own part to assist in effecting so important a purpose, I could wish to be invested with power, not inferior to be sure, to that which Milton bestows upon his Devils, to tear up Mountains by the Roots or wield some of these elements; at least, I should want, for a little while, to be possessed of a voice of thunder, so that I might stand some chance to awaken those, who I fear nothing will except the last Trumpet.

Apropos of the last Trumpet, you have undoubtedly heard of the dark day with us, the speculations on it were curious, and would, I dare say be amusing to you, but time would fail me to enumerate them. Many who apprehended the last day was at hand began to think of repenting. Others turned out as Volunteers to preach and pray and prophesy and help their neighbours out at a dead light. It is said the Assembly broke up not without some precipitation & indications of terror, that they might be sent for before they were quite ready, or had got their business in such forwardness, as that they could possibly leave it. Amongst the rest, there was a certain fat old Gentleman, known by the name of Col. Davenport, who having wrapped himself up in his corpulency and integrity, behaved with very great composure and firmness; observing "that it was best for the Sheriff to order Candles, that they might go on with their business, that if they should be called for they might be found in the way of their duty." But I imagine the greater part of the multitude, began to think that the Prince of the Regions of darkness, who is sometimes styled, the Prince of the Power of the air, was about uniting both his kingdoms into one, in the same manner as England & Scotland were formerly incorporated—And altho they had been his most faithful adherents & humble servants, (as it was well known that like other Monarchs, he was rather apt to be ungrateful to his best friends & benefactors) they were not without fear that it might be a dark day with them in more senses than one, tho' they could not be under any apprehension of being treated as Rebels, as being conscious they never had forfeited their allegiance & fidelity to his infernal Majesty.

I have just returned from my visit to General Putnam, & left him in good spirits & very cleverly in every respect, but his lameness. I have a letter from him to you, which I hope to have the honor of delivering with my own hand, soon after the arrival of this.

I am, Dear Sir
Your Most Obed Hble Servt.
D. Humphrey

The "dark day" referred to in this letter was long remembered in New England. That entire region was awed and startled on Friday, May 19, 1780, by a remarkable darkness. It had been raining early in the morning and about ten o'clock the heavens began to grow black and from about eleven o'clock to two o'clock candles were necessary. Dr. Stiles, who observed the phenomenon at Newport, R. I., notes that during its greatest intensity there was a "glim of light in the edge of the horizon." In an account sent by him to the newspapers he observes that while such appearances had been known before in other parts of the world, and notably "on the coast of Africa and in Europe and partly in London on A. D. 1679," yet, "it is not recollected from History that a darkness of equal intenseness and duration has ever happened in any parts of the world except in Egypt, and at the miraculous Eclipse at the Crucifixion of our Blessed Saviour."[1]

Putnam's letter to Greene referred to in the preceding, is as follows:

Pomfret, May 29th, 1780.

Dear Sir:

I have seen a letter of yours to Major Humphreys, in which you make mention very kindly of me, and express those senti-

[1] *Diary of the Rev. Dr. Stoles*, vol. ii., pp. 424, 425, for the darkness at Newport; pp. 430, 436 for other places.

ments of benevolence and friendship. I beg you will do me the justice to believe that the recollection and kindness of so good a friend, is almost a sovereign remedy against every disorder; and will (if anything in nature can) set me upon my legs again. And as I know you are not indifferent to anything which concerns me so intimately as the possession of my health does; you will please to be informed, that (bating this confounded lameness) I enjoy myself as well as ever I did in my life. Indeed I have obtained the use of my limbs, so far as to be able to walk, & ride on horseback; and hope to have the pleasure of waiting on you in Camp, before a great while.

Whether I shall ever be able to take the field or not, I cannot determine, but I have charged Major Humphreys to tell you that I am very well pleased with your offer to him, of coming into your family as a Volunteer Aide. For should I resume my command in the Army I should be glad to have him with me; and in the meantime, I do not wish, by my illness, to prevent him from doing any service to his Country in his power.

The news of a french fleet, and the prospect of going into New York, give me, I imagine some such kind of feel ings, as an old war horse experiences at the sound of the Trumpet. At least if such important active operations take place, as it is conjectured will, I should like to be near at hand, where I can see for myself and know the certainty of matters without being obliged to doubt of everything or on the other hand, to swallow every lie a News Paper is pleased to impose upon me, altho it should be as big as a mountain.

I am, Dear Sir
with every sentiment of friendship & esteem
Your most obedient
and very Hble Servant,
ISRAEL PUTNAM.

I am obliged to write by another hand not being able to use my own.

To GENL. GREENE.

The "other hand" Putnam refers to was that of Humphreys, the letter being written and doubtless composed by the Major.

The desire expressed by our soldier to be again in active service was fulfilled in a most gratifying manner. His fitness for the part of an aide-de-camp had been tested by nearly three years of intelligent and satisfactory work under Gen. Parsons and Gen. Putnam. There was at this time a vacancy in the military family of the Commander-in-Chief, by the retirement of Gol. Laurens, a son of the Hon. Henry Laurens, sometime President of the Continental Congress, a brave and intrepid young officer who won the regard of all who knew him. Col. Laurens was then a prisoner on parole having temporarily been engaged in the southern campaign and made prisoner by the surrender of Charleston.

There are no documents to show at what time the offer of his honourable position was made to Col. Humphreys. Gen. William Hull, his friend and townsman, states that through Gen. Parsons this office was first offered to him. As Gen. Hull was then the chief assistant of Baron Steuben in disciplining and drilling the Continental Army as Deputy Inspector General, he delayed his answer until after consulting with the Baron.

That General impressed upon him the very great importance of the service he was rendering to his country in his present capacity.

I felt compelled [says Gen. Hull] to decline the honour of an appointment so gratifying to my feelings and so calculated to elevate me in the eyes of my countrymen. I requested that when an answer should be given to General Washington that my views should be stated to him. I observed to General Parsons that he knew the character and situation of our mutual friend, Colonel Humphreys, that he knew he had served as

aide-de-camp to General Putnam, who on account of age and bodily infirmities would not again be called into active service. That Colonel Humphreys still ranked as Captain and would now return to the command of his company. Being satisfied with his qualifications I would take the liberty to recommend him for the appointment with which he had intended to honour me.

Gen. Hull made this statement late in life as he had noticed in a newspaper that Major Allen, Col. Humphreys, and himself had been the candidates, and the preference had been given to Col. Humphreys.[1]

It is probable that other influential friends, of whom he had many, mentioned him favourably to Gen. Washington. His letter to Gen. Greene, already quoted, seems to show that he had then no intention of the prospect before him. It is only a few days later that in "a letter to a Young Lady in Boston" he closes with these patriotic lines:

The cannon's distant thunders ring,
And wake to deeds of death the spring:
Far other sounds once touched my ear,
And ushered in the flow'ry year:
But, now, adieu the *tuneful train*,
The warblings of my native plain;
Adieu the scenes that charm'd my view,
And thou, fair maid, again adieu.
Farewel the bow'rs and conscious shades!—
My country's cause my soul invades—
Yes, rous'd by sense of country's wrongs.
I give the wind my idle songs:
No vacant hour for rhime succeeds,
I go where e'er the battle bleeds.

[1] *Revolutionary Services and Civil Life of General William Hull*, by his daughter, Mrs. Maria Campbell, pp. 174–177. *History of the Campaign of 1812* by his grandson, James Freeman Clarke, p. xx., 482.

To-morrow—(brief then be my story)—
I go to WASHINGTON *and* GLORY;
His aid-de-camp—in acts when tried—
Resolv'd (whatever fates betide)
My conduct, till my final breath,
Shall not disgrace my life or death.[1]

In a letter that does not seem to be extant Gen. Greene offered Col. Humphreys a place upon his Staff. It was evidently not intended to be permanent, as the offer from Washington must have been made in April.

Our soldier, writing to General Greene on May 23, 1780, says:

We are at this moment made happy by the arrival of the news from your quarter that a French fleet will be on the coast in a few days; this with many other things will induce me probably to accept the kind offer of com ng into your family in the manner you propose, for which and every other instance of your friendship, you will ever receive my most grateful acknowledgements.[2]

After the inaction of the winter with its intense cold, and suffering by the troops for want of clothing and provisions, the Spring of 1780 opened upon a supine Congress, indifferent states and a discontented army. The British forces in the South were by their numbers and stratagems exhausting the energies of the army under Gen. Lincoln. They had besieged Charleston, completely investing it. The garrison of Fort Moultrie had previously surrendered, and finally on May 12, 1780, Gen. Lincoln signed articles of capitulation thus leaving Sir Henry Clinton and his army practically masters of South Carolina.

[1] *The Miscellaneous Works of Colonel Humphreys*, New York; Hodge, Allen, and Campbell, 1790, p. 96.

[2] The *Humphreys Family in America*, p. 156.

Colonel Humphreys deplored the situation, and was all the more eager to take the field. He speedily followed his letter of May 30th and joined Gen. Greene at his headquarters near Morristown in June.

There was no general officer in whom the Commander-in-Chief placed greater confidence or held in higher esteem than the former Quaker from Rhode Island, Nathaniel Greene. His military knowledge, his foresight, and lack of self-seeking made him a refreshing contrast to some of his fellow generals who were in frequent contention, as to their relative ranks, and allowed piques and jealousies to interfere with the proper prosecution of the Campaign. Gen. Greene was thoroughly liked by his officers and men. It was a post of honour to be in his military family. He made himself very agreeable to his aides and other members of the household. His young and beautiful wife, who was the brilliant Catherine Littlefield, dispensed at the headquarters whether in a hastily constructed hut at a winter cantonment, or in some convenient house, a graceful and bountiful hospitality and provided a pleasant home for the numerous attachés and officials which the varied duties of his difficult task as Quarter Master General made necessary. The ladies of the Army, Mrs. Washington, Mrs. Knox, wife of Gen. Henry Knox of Massachusetts, chief of Artillery, and Mrs. Greene, tempered with mild gaieties the rigours of the winters at Valley Forge and Morristown. While Washington had for his headquarters the spacious mansion of Colonel Jacob Ford at Morristown, Mrs. Washington, a pattern of a soldier's wife during the day, attending to her household cares, directing the servants, working for the soldiers in her plain dress and receiving with stately dignity the frequent guests of her illustrious spouse, at night would often give informal dances where the music would be the homely fife and rolling drum, and where the cares of the

army and the misfortunes of the day were put aside by the General as with his Virginian ease and courtesy he walked through the solemn minuet with the wife or daughter of some officer or guest or had some fair partner for the merrier Virginia reel. It is traditional that at one of the dances at Gen. Greene's headquarters, Mrs. Greene and Gen. Washington danced continually for three hours. In describing it Gen. Greene said "We had a pretty little frisk."[1]

A recent writer says:

Under the arch of this most beautiful Colonial door way passed such American Generals as Knox, genial and fine looking as he was brave and true; gallant Maxwell, who had served under Wolfe at Quebec; Wayne who if he was "Mad Anthony" on the battlefield was "Dandy Wayne" in my lady's parlour; the splendid fighting Quaker Greene; "Molly Stark's husband" whose command lay over among the hills; Gist and Smallwood; and such distinguished foreigners as Von Steuben, Kosciusko, and La Fayette,—who was like a younger brother to the General and his wife—the chevalier de la Luzerne, and Don Juan de Mirailles. Here also came the Governors of States, members of Congress and many Jersey patriots to call upon the Commander-in-Chief, bringing their wives and their daughters with them to pay their respects to Lady Washington. Pretty Mrs. Green tripped up those steps many times with her dear friend Cornelia Lott, and Lady Stirling and her daughter, now Lady Kitty Duer, Mrs. Knox, and Mrs. John Cochran.[2]

When Col. Humphreys joined the pleasant circle at Gen. Greene's headquarters he found the camp already

[1] Mary A. Greene in *New England Magazine*, January, 1898, vol. xvii., No. 5, p. 561.

[2] Pp. 134, 135, *Martha Washington*, by Anne Hollingsworth Wharton, with Portrait. In the Series of *Women of Colonial and Revolutionary Times*, Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York.

Washington's Headquarters at Morristown

in motion. Washington learning of the arrival of Sir Henry Clinton at New York with four thousand troops, had advanced to Rockaway ten miles from Morristown preparatory to marching into the Highlands if the enemy should make an attack in that quarter as seemed probable from the passage of a few small vessels with troops up the Hudson. General Knyphausen, who in the absence of Sir Henry commanded at New York knew of the distress and discontent of the main American Army. He had sent emissaries among the men to induce them to mutiny or to desert. He thought that a good opportunity was now given him to strike an effective blow at Washington. He knew of the mutiny of the Connecticut troops, which had been with great difficulty quelled on May 25.[1]

The circulation of a handbill of British origin giving the particulars of the fall of Charleston gave to Washington and the whole army a new cause for gloomy forebodings. But the report which came early on the morning of June 6, that the enemy was landing a large force at Elizabethtown Point was startling and created a general alarm.

Five thousand fresh troops from their camp on Staten Island under the command of Gen. Knyphausen advanced on the seventh toward[2] Springfield where there was a magazine of military stores. The General thought that wearied with a hopeless contest and impoverished by the requisitions for the American army the farmers and soldiers would hasten to range themselves under the British standard. As he proceeded he perceived that the

[1] Marshall's *Washington*, iv., pp. 222–23; Irving's *Washington*, iv., pp. 42, 43.

[2] Lossing says Brig. Gen. Matthew commanded the detachment, Marshall and Irving that Gen. Knyphausen commanded in person, Lossing's *Field Book*, 1, p. 322; Marshall, iv., p. 223; Irving, iv., p. 62.

temper and desires of the people had been misrepresented to him. Upon the first alarm Col. Elias Dayton had summoned the militia near Elizabethtown and the troops of the Jersey line to oppose the onward progress of the British. This body of Americans was too small to do more than harass the British and keep up a galling fire by small detachments wherever it was possible. The British went as far as Connecticut Farms, six miles from Elizabethtown, which after the example of Gen. Tryon, they burned. Here also some of the soldiers brutally fired through a window of the Presbyterian parsonage into a room where was sitting Mrs. Caldwell the wife of the Rev. James Caldwell, a chaplain in the American army, popularly known as "the rousing Gospel preacher," and killed her.

The determined stand of the New Jersey line under Col. Dayton showed the British commander that his design would be frustrated and he withdrew his force within the old earthworks built by the Continental soldiers at the Point.

When Gen. Clinton returned from the South and resumed command, Gen. Knyphausen made another attempt to capture the stores in the vicinity of Springfield and Morristown. It was the design of the British to bring on a general engagement with the reduced and dispirited Continental Army. Washington suspecting the purpose of the enemy had remained encamped for some days among the Short Hills near Springfield and then removed with the greater portion of the soldiers to Rockaway. Gen. Greene was left at Springfield with the New Jersey Brigade of Gen. Maxwell, the New Hampshire Brigade of Gen. Stark, the dragoons of Col. Henry Lee, and such New Jersey militia as could then be gathered. It was at this critical moment that our soldier gained a just view of the real ability of Gen. Greene who acted

with quickness and sagacity in making his preparations to repel the enemy and prevent their passage to Morristown. He placed small detachments as guards in the various passes. The principal portion of the brigades were detailed to watch the two main roads through the village which finally united outside its limits and led through the Short Hills.

Early on the morning of Friday, June 23, the pickets perceived that Gen. Knyphausen was advancing rapidly from Elizabethtown with the troops in two columns towards Springfield. Gen. Greene re-assembled his men from their scattered situations and sent "Major Lee with the horse and pickets to oppose their right column and Colonel Dayton with his regiment the left." The conflict in front was continued with vigour for two hours until the actions of the enemy were such that Gen. Greene was convinced a movement upon the flanks was meditated. He then disposed his little army in a different way. Col. Angell with two hundred selected men and one piece of artillery was sent to guard a bridge over the Rahway "a little West of the Town."

Col. Shrieve was posted at a second bridge on a branch of the Rahway east of the town, to cover the retreat from the first bridge, if necessary. Major Lee with his dragoons and the pickets under Capt. Walker was stationed at Liddle's Bridge on the Vauxhall road with Col. Ogden to support him. The other troops of Gen. Maxwell's and Gen. Stark's brigades were drawn up "at the high ground at the mill." The militia were on the flanks. A gallant attempt was made by Gen. Dickinson upon a British flanking party, but his force was too weak to allow him to follow up his advantage. The right column disputed desperately the bridge with Major Lee, until fording the river the British gained the point of the Hill and the intrepid Major was compelled to fall back. The left

column was then pressing Col. Angell very hard "and forced our troops to retire over the second bridge." Col. Shrieve bravely defended the second bridge until the order for the Colonel and his men to join the brigade. At this juncture Gen. Greene thought it advisable to concentrate the troops upon the first range of hills in the rear of Bryant's Tavern "where the roads are brought so near to a point that succor might readily be given from one to the other." Col. Webb's regiment under Lieut. Col. Huntington with that of Col. Jackson and one piece of artillery were detached to check the advance of the British. This was effectually done. Gen. Greene, being now strongly posted would willingly have given battle to Gen. Knyphausen, but after the British soldiers had set fire to many buildings in the village they commenced to retreat. Detachments of the Continentals were sent to put out the fires whenever they were not under the direct range of the enemy's guns, but the flames had made such headway that nearly the whole village was destroyed. Gen. Stark's brigade was sent in pursuit of the British who reached Elizabethtown at sunset. Major Davis with one hundred and twenty men and a large body of militia fell upon their rear and flanks, and kept up a continual fire upon them until they entered Elizabethtown. Major Lee followed the rear guard to Elizabethtown Point where the earth-works protected them, and took some refugee prisoners. At twelve o'clock that night the British troops began to embark for Staten Island, and by six o'clock in the morning all had left the Point.

The military skill of Gen. Greene had driven the British from New Jersey, and they made no attempt to reinvade it.

The services of Col. Humphreys were called into requisition frequently during the day by the Commander.

At the height of the engagement he sent this dispatch to Gen. Washington:

HEIGHTS NEAR SPRINGFIELD, June 23, '80.
11 o'clock A.M.

SIR:

General Greene directs me to inform your Excellency that from the best intelligence he is able to obtain, the enemy are now out in force with seventeen pieces of artillery. At first they made a demonstration of acting on his right; and large parties were seen from the heights of Springfield filing off in that direction. A considerable column in the meantime advanced on his left where Major Lee with a body of militia were posted, between whom and the enemy there was some skirmishing without any considerable effect.

After having spent two or three hours in various manoeuvres apparently with a design of gaining our flanks, they of a sudden contracted their front and pushed a column up the main road to Springfield where a sharp action ensued for a short time between some detachments, which were posted to cover our artillery on the height, and then advance—Our troops retreated in order and brought off the field-pieces. The troops are advantageously posted to annoy the enemy's progress, and General Greene is determined to dispute every inch of strong ground with them. Indeed they must have been very much galled before they got possession of Springfield, as they rec'd several heavy and well directed fires from Angell's and Shrieve's Regts. which behaved with the greatest gallantry. The firing has now principally ceased. The loss on either side cannot be ascertained—on our's it is not great. Several of our wounded are brought off. A Dragoon Horse of the detachment which escorted General Greene was killed with a cannon shot. I have heard of no officers killed, and but few slightly wounded,—they have this moment set fire to two or three buildings. How far

the conflagration will extend I know not. In the greatest haste

I have the honour to be
Your Excellency's
Most Obed't Hble. Servt.
D. Humphreys.

His Excellency
General Washington.[1]

The morning orders of that day issued from Rockaway headquarters announced the appointment of "Captain David Humphreys of the Connecticut line" as aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief.

MORNING ORDERS, JUNE 23RD

The Men will cook their provision immediately they are to be kept Compact in readiness for a sudden movement.

Headquarters Rockaway, Friday, June 23rd, 1780.

Parole. Countersigns. Watchword.

In case a sudden movement should become necessary two piece of Cannon will be fired at the Park as a signal to the Troops to get under Arms.

The General officers present will assemble at General Hands Brigade this afternoon five o'clock to take into consideration a dispute of rank between Colonels Livingston and Hazen of that brigade and will as speedily as possible report their opinion to the Commander-in-Chief——

[1] Professor Johnston's *Yale in the Revolution*, pp. 118, 119. The original letter is in the Sparks Collection at Harvard University: The dispatch is endorsed: "Opened at Mr. Lott's 5 o'clock P.M. by your humble Servt. Anty Wayne."

The authorities for the Battle of Springfield are: General Greene, Official dispatches in the *Life of Nathaniel Greene, Major General in the Army of the Revolution*, by George Washington Greene, vol. ii., pp. 198–200; Sir Henry Clinton's Letter in Spark's *Washington*, viii., p. 86; Matthew's Narrative, *Historical Magazine*, i., p. 104; Marshall's *Washington*, iv. pp. 234–238; Irving's *Washington*, iv., pp. 69–72; Lossing's *Field Book of the Revolution*, i., pp. 322–325.

The General has often observed much unnecessary damage done to Grass grounds by turning the horses of the Army at large upon them by which means more is trodden down than is consumed. Care will therefore be taken in future when the Army Halts near mowing grounds to have the grass cut & brought to the horses—The Officers commanding divisions and brigades will see this order executed and the Quartermaster General will direct that it is particularly attended to by the Conductors of Teams not attached to any particular part of the Line.

Captain David Humphreys of the Connecticut Line is appointed Aide-de-Camp to the Commander-in-Chief and is to be respected and obeyed accordingly.

Brigade Field Returns (of the officers and men present fit for action regimentally digested) are to be delivered in at five o'clock this afternoon at which time After Orders will be issued.

AFTER ORDERS

In the present divided state of our Force the second Pennsylvania, Hand's and two Connecticut Brigades are to form one line—the park of Artillery will be between Hand's brigade and the Connecticut Troops—the troops will lay on their arms in their proper Platoons. Officers of all ranks are to be at their Posts, Headquarters will be at the Park of Artillery.

General St. Clair will see that proper Requests are posted for the security of the right Wing and General Huntington will do the same for the security of the Left Wing.

CHAPTER X

The French Allies

Status of the Aide-de-Camp to Washington—Washington's New Headquarters at Preakness—Arrival of French Fleet under Rochambeau—Washington Marches to King's Bridge—Withdraws to Tappan—Meeting of Washington with Rochambeau—And the French Officers at Hartford—Washington's Visit to West Point—Capture of André—Flight of Arnold—Humphreys' Letter—Trial and Execution of André—Humphreys' Letter to Thomas Wooster—Washington Returns to Preakness—Visit of de Chastellux—Who Proposes a Plan for an Attack on New York—Humphreys' Description of it—Washington's Secret Instructions to Humphreys—Failure of the Plan—Humphreys' Negro Company.

FROM the day which officially marked his appointment as aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief, Humphreys became a member of Washington's military family. As we will see in the course of this Memoir no one served the Father of our Country with greater zeal and affection than David Humphreys. Henceforth our soldier shared in the joys and anxieties of the Continental Commander.

Gen. Washington gave to his aides his sincere respect and esteem and treated them with confidence and courtesy. They were more than mere machines to write orders, conduct official correspondence, and ride to various points at the bidding of their chief. They were necessarily much immersed in the routine of military life; there were many details for them to care for, there was much inevitable

inspection of provisions and clothing. The officers and men stationed at a distance from headquarters had to be visited and counselled. As the communications were often of too confidential a nature to be fully committed to writing, Washington chose those members of his household with great care and with that almost unerring judgment of men which he possessed.

At this time the veteran of the staff was Col. Tench Tilghman, of Maryland. He was a young scion of an ancient family, and to grace of manner added executive ability and personal courage. Col. Alexander Hamilton was the most striking figure in the little group around Washington. His beauty of person, his quickness to grasp and execute the plans of his chief, his clear style as a writer of good English gave to him the composition of many important documents issued from headquarters which did not require to be written by the Commander himself. He also was skilled in the technical part of the profession of arms.

That enthusiastic and liberty-loving Frenchman, the Marquis de La Fayette, was still in name an aide, although he had been for more than a year in France and had received a separate command as Major-General. His real merits and desire to serve the American cause, his courtly air and affectionate heart endeared him to Washington, who treated him as a son. Col. James McHenry of Maryland was then filling with much acceptance the post of private secretary. Toward the close of Washington's second administration he was made Secretary of War. His name was given to the fort in Baltimore harbour, the brave defence of which by Major Armistead in the War of 1812 gave occasion for that stirring national song *The Star Spangled Banner*.

It was into this congenial company of young men of high breeding and education, all ardent admirers of their

beloved general, that David Humphreys was now admitted. By Mrs. Washington, or "Lady Washington" as she was even then often called, he was welcomed with that warmth of manner and sincerity which she gave to all her husband's trusted friends. She was careful of the comfort of the aides and both she and the General spared them any unnecessary discomfort.

Washington shortly after the battle of Springfield removed his headquarters to the house of Col. Dey at Preakness near the Passaic River. It was his intention to watch closely the movements of Sir Henry Clinton and not allow him to advance against West Point. A recent writer says:

> The main body of the army was encamped on the Totowa Heights, near the great falls of the Passaic, Colonel Moyland's Pennsylvania Dragoons occupying an advanced position at the Little Falls on the opposite side of the river, while the Marquis de La Fayette had his headquarters at the residence of Samuel Van Saun, near Sanford's race track, and about a mile from the Dey house.[1]

The Dey house is described as being situated in a beautiful valley just over the brow of Preakness hill. Charming vistas extended for many miles through openings in the mountains in almost every direction, and the plain was traversed by roads leading to Newark, Elizabethtown, Springfield and Southern New Jersey, to Totowa and Hackensack on the south-east and Paramas, Pompton and Ridgewood toward the north-east.

The house was built in a very substantial manner with a brick front. It was two stories high, and had a double pitched roof. On the first floor was a hall twelve feet wide and thirty feet deep, with two rooms on each side of it.

[1] Mr. William Nelson in *The Magazine of American History*, vol. iii., p. 490.

Tench Tilghman

The house was fifty feet wide. It was standing in excellent repair a few years ago. The south-east room over the first floor is still known as Washington's room. It is a spacious apartment with elaborately carved wooden cornices and wainscoting around the walls and panelled and carved woodwork above the fireplace. It is said to have been papered at Washington's expense. This was the room used as his office and sitting room. He occupied for himself and his military staff four rooms, two on the first and two on the second floor. It is traditional that throughout this summer there was a scheme to capture Gen. Washington. This entailed special vigilance by his aides and that small body of picked men known as "the commander-in-chief's Guards," but more commonly as "Washington's Life Guards," then under the command of Major William Colfax.[1]

This is supposed to be one of the reasons why a situation so remote from the greater portion of the army was at this time chosen for headquarters. It is said that owing to the great distance, seven or eight miles, "officers of the day were excused from reporting at headquarters when there was nothing more than common to report." In this safe and delightful retreat Washington remained until after the arrival of the Chevalier de Ternay, commanding a portion of the French fleet and a body of troops under the Comte de Rochambeau at Newport, Rhode Island, on July 10th.[2] There were in it seven ships-of-the-line, two frigates and two bombs with transports to convey the five thousand officers and men. It was hoped that with this reinforcement the Americans and their allies

[1] Some interesting particulars about the Guard will be found in Lossing's *Field Book*, vol. ii., pp. 121, 122. Miss Wharton's *Martha Washington*, p. 134.

[2] See vol. iv., pp. 76–79, of Irving's *Washington*, for particulars of their reception and encampment.

could successfully attack and capture New York. The plan for this purpose had long been maturing in the mind of Washington. He knew that such a blow would practically end the war.

He now awaited a suitable time to confer with the Count and Chevalier who were warmly greeted by the patriots of Rhode Island. Washington sent La Fayette as his messenger to welcome his compatriots, and explain to them his plans for a combined attack upon New York. At the same time he used every effort to fill up the depleted ranks of the Continental army and addressed a letter to Congress, and the authorities of several of the States.

The departure of Sir Henry Clinton from New York with six thousand men who were to attack the French in their strong position on Rhode Island aided by the fleet of Sir George Arbuthnot gave an opportunity to the American commander.

Washington thought that the weakened garrison of New York might be overcome if he should rapidly gather his forces and menace the city. He broke up the camp at Totowa, marched to the Hudson and crossing it with nearly ten thousand men proceeded as far as King's Bridge. A change of plan by the British commander after he was informed of the formidable character of the works at Rhode Island and the stations of the vessels of the French fleet caused him to return suddenly to New York after spending a short time at Huntington. Washington was disappointed. He withdrew to the west side of the Hudson and encamped at Orangetown or Tappan two miles back from the river. This little town was at the head of a plain extending southward to New York, well watered and very productive. It was sheltered by the Palisades and made an admirable site for this purpose. Washington's headquarters were in an

old stone house, quaint and comfortable. On his way to his encampment he established a post and threw up earthworks at Dobbs Ferry on the east side of the river about ten miles from King's Bridge.

He waited anxiously for the return of La Fayette, and made every preparation for the proposed attempt on New York. It was hard for him to give up the design so long formed but the result of the interview of La Fayette, Rochambeau and de Ternay was that since the arrival in New York harbour of Admiral Graves with six English ships-of-the-line, and the blockade of Newport harbour by Admiral Arbuthnot, nothing could be done. The French troops were besides weary from their long voyage, many of them being still very ill.

While the affairs in the North were thus not progressing as had been hoped for, the victorious British Generals in the South were gaining new victories over Gen. Gates at Camden, and in many skirmishes. Lord Cornwallis had shown himself, when not under the influence of Howe, a capable commander. He was quick to strike a blow and to take every advantage the enemy offered him.

Washington was still meditating upon the best methods of arousing the country and securing men and supplies. He was also very desirous of meeting the French Admiral and French General so that a plan of campaign might be decided on between them. He still held to his opinion that New York was the best objective point when the remainder of the French fleet, under Count Guichen, should arrive from the West Indies.

In a correspondence which he opened up with de Rochambeau and de Ternay, the various possible plans of campaign were discussed. The invasion of Canada, of course, was the only one that did not require a naval force; all the others, such as the recovery of the South, depended upon the co-operation of the naval and land forces. New

York, however, was the one vital point which the Americans must obtain.

While much could be settled by correspondence it was impossible to provide for every detail in that way. How much of the correspondence and the drafting of these letters fell to Humphreys we have no means of knowing. Still as he was the most finished scholar among Washington's aides and the master of a vigorous prose style there can be little doubt that much of it fell to his lot.

The summer was one of anxiety, depression, and yet hope for the American people and the American army. They were constantly expecting that the junction between the forces would be made and an effective battle fought and won.

The result of the correspondence with the French officers was that a conference was necessary before the final plan of campaign could be made. The feelings of the Commander-in-Chief at this time are shown in a letter to an intimate friend written toward the end of the summer:

> We are now drawing to a close an inactive campaign, the beginning of which appeared pregnant with events of a very favourable complexion. I hoped but I hoped in vain, that a prospect was opening which would enable me to fix a period to my military pursuits and restore me to domestic life. . . . We have lived upon expedients until we can live no longer. In a word the history of the war is a history of false hopes and temporary devices instead of system and economy. It is vain however to look back, nor is it our business to do so.[1]

The pressing need of an interview with the French officers was seen by Washington. This was finally arranged to be held in Hartford on September 21st.

Washington, with his staff, Gen. Knox and the Marquis de La Fayette set out on a bright September morning,

[1] Quoted on pp. 268, 269, vol. iv., Marshall's *Washington*.

Monday the 18th, for the ride to Hartford. It was a small but brilliant cavalcade. The Commander-in-Chief in his blue and white uniform with the broad blue ribbon denoting his rank, the aides in their smartest uniforms, also blue, but faced with buff, and La Fayette in his uniform as general in the French army with the other members of the little company in their best array all combined to make a brave show. To the villagers and farmers the company seemed a gay and cheerful one. The cheerfulness was, however, only outward. At heart all were oppressed with a common anxiety, the lack of money. How to obtain the necessary funds for the journey had been the pressing question before leaving camp. Washington had practically exhausted his private resources. Public credit there was none. A loan from individuals was the only possible plan. Finally eight thousand Continental dollars were secured in this manner from various persons. The paper money issued by Congress had at this time so declined in value that even when it was accepted, it was only at the rate of sixty paper dollars for one "hard" dollar.

This sore lack of funds added to the imperious necessity of striking some vigorous blow that would restore the falling fortunes of the Continental army. It made Washington keener than ever to perfect some plan by which, if possible, the war could be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

As the cavalcade passed through village after village it was greeted with music, the applause of the people and their hearty God speed. In one village, reached after the shades of night had fallen, the whole population was in procession to cheer and speed the "hope of the republic" on his way. Children with torches illuminated the street and led Washington through the town. Each was eager to grasp the hand of Washington. It was a scene which

deeply affected him. Turning to Count Dumas, the representative of Count de Rochambeau, he said: "We may be beaten by the British, it is the chance of war, but there is an army they will never conquer." It was a real relief to Washington to know that his good friend "Brother Jonathan," the war Governor of Connecticut, had with thoughtful care made every provision for the comfort of himself and his friends. They were during their stay to be the guests of the State. A contemporary historian, Dr. Gordon, says that the paymaster of the party was much embarrassed by the possible failure of the small funds he had on hand and feared he would be unable "to pay their way." They all however

> put on a good countenance when in Connecticut, called for what they wanted, and were well supplied,—but the thought of reckoning with their host damped their pleasure. To their great joy, however, when the bills were called for they were informed that the Governor of Connecticut had given orders that they should pay nothing in that State but should be at free cost.[1]

As they approached Hartford they were met by a military escort, the Governor's Foot Guards attired in their striking uniforms, a survival from Colonial days, a company of artillery which fired a salute of thirteen guns, Gov. Trumbull, Col. Wadsworth and other distinguished sons of the State. They passed through crowds of people who from all the neighbouring towns had flocked to Hartford to see the great General and his companions. He was loudly cheered as he passed slowly along acknowledging their greeting. The reception of La Fayette was not less cordial and every member of the party was duly applauded.

[1] Dr. William Gordon's *History of the Rise, Progress and Establishment of the Independence of the United States.*

Upon arriving at Hartford the cortège halted by the elm which shaded the mansion of Col. Wadsworth. Washington, La Fayette, Knox and their immediate associates dismounted and were received upon the porch by the graceful Mrs. Wadsworth and the ladies of the family. Here they were nobly entertained while in the city. The other members of the party were escorted to their abiding places.

Upon the following day the French officers arrived. After crossing the ferry from East Hartford they were received by the authorities at the City Landing and with the same military escort as before. Washington marched to the front of the Capitol. Here he, his staff, and companions, met them. Courtesy, dignity and cordiality marked the meeting. Again the people shouted, salutes were fired, and to martial music the brilliantly attired Frenchmen, the Governor, the state and city officials, Washington and his staff and generals marched to the Wadsworth house where Rochambeau and de Ternay with their personal staff enjoyed the bountiful hospitality of Col. Wadsworth. The scene during the procession is described as surpassing any that had previously taken place in the city. Washington is said for this occasion to have worn a "buff vest, buff breeches, buckles at the knee, long spurred boots, white neck cloth and blue buff-lined coat, that shone with a pair of rich massive epaulets."[1]

Gen. Knox and the other American officers also wore their buff and blue uniforms. The French officers wore the uniform appropriate to their ranks; upon their breasts suspended by broad ribbons were the insignia of the order of St. Louis and other orders, made of gold and which glistened as the rays of the sun fell upon them. The conferences were held at Col. Wadsworth's. They were long and earnest. Gov. Trumbull and Col. Wadsworth

[1] Stuart's *Trumbull*, p. 486.

were invited to take part in them. The chief subject was the possibility of a combined attack upon New York provided that the fleet of Comte de Guichen could come from the West Indies to unite with the vessels already at Newport; the invasion of Canada was regarded favourably, and a campaign for the recovery of the South was seriously discussed. Naturally, each party was desirous of perfecting some plan by which the British could be permanently crippled.

The news that de Guichen had sailed from the West Indies for France instead of for New York was a bitter disappointment to Washington because it made his plan of an attack on New York impossible for the present. The conference closed on Thursday evening, and on Friday the French commanders commenced their return journey. The conference effected nothing practical at the time, but it laid the foundations of a mutual esteem and confidence.

De Ternay, who was then far from well, died before the close of the year.[1]

No definite plan was arranged upon for as Washington remarked, "We could only combine possible plans on the supposition of possible events, and engage mutually to do everything in our power against the next campaign."[2]

The ride to the Hudson through a well cultivated region in the clear September air, the trees gorgeous in their fall tints, and with agreeable company, was a pleasant relaxation to Washington who seemed for the time to have thrown aside some of the burden of care and anxiety which usually made him grave and silent. Upon ap-

[1] He died at Newport on December 15, 1780, in his fifty-ninth year. He was buried in Trinity Churchyard "with great pomp and ceremony." King Louis sent in 1785 a suitably inscribed tablet which was affixed to the exterior of the Church. In 1872, the French Ambassador, Marquis de Noailles, had it repaired and it was then placed in the vestibule. He also marked the grave of the Admiral with a granite stone suitably inscribed.

[2] Stuart's *Trumbull*, p. 487.

proaching the river he turned from the direct road to the camp that he might with his suite and friends make an inspection of West Point and show La Fayette the improvements made while he was in Europe.

The command of that fortress and the other forts in the Highlands had, at his earnest request, been given in July to Gen. Benedict Arnold, whose dash and bravery the Commander-in-Chief admired and whose conduct of the Canada campaign in 1775 after the death of Gen. Montgomery was skilful and resourceful. Gen. Arnold established his headquarters at the Robinson house, to which he brought his charming young wife and infant son. Mrs. Arnold dispensed here as in her Philadelphia home a bounteous hospitality. It was a pleasant resort for the young officers of the garrison and the attachés of the Tappan camp.

Washington had known Mrs. Arnold as Margaret Shippen when encamped at Valley Forge, and esteemed and respected her. It had been the General's intention that his company should spend Saturday night at the Arnold headquarters and afterward cross to West Point.

Encountering the French Minister, the Chevalier de Luzerne, on his way to visit Comte de Rochambeau, a short distance below Fishkill, he turned back with him and spent the night in that village. Very early on Sunday morning Washington and his friends were in the saddle, the baggage having been sent ahead on Saturday with a note informing Gen. Arnold that they would take breakfast with him on Sunday. It was a delightful, but rough ride of eighteen miles. When approaching Sugar Loaf Mountain, Washington headed his horse for a road leading to the river. Upon La Fayette's remonstrating that it would take them out of their way, and that Mrs. Arnold would be waiting for them, the General with one of his rare sallies of pleasantry said: "Ah, Marquis, I know you

young men are all in love with Mrs. Arnold and are eager to see her as soon as possible. Go and take breakfast with her,—I must ride down and see the redoubts on this side of the river,—and will join you shortly." The whole party accompanied him with the exception of Col. Hamilton and Col. McHenry, the acting aide to La Fayette, who proceeded to the house bearing the General's apologies and message.

To the commandant of West Point the presence of the Commander-in-Chief was peculiarly unwelcome and hazardous, for during the visit to Hartford he had engaged in a plot which was of momentous consequence to the American cause.

Gen. Arnold was indignant at supposed slights, insults, and accusations from individual patriots, officers of the army and the Continental Congress. After many months of correspondence he had held an interview with an accredited agent of the British Commander-in-Chief. For nearly two years he had thought that his merit was unrecognized, and that name and fame would come to him by this course. He was personally courageous, but reckless, careless, extravagant, fond of display, vain and selfish. The importunity of his many creditors harassed and annoyed him. His own pecuniary freedom he considered of greater consequence than the freedom of his native land.

West Point was a prize which the British would be glad to purchase at a great price. He bargained with a cool audacity under the fiction of a proposed mercantile enterprise in a correspondence conducted for more than a year under assumed names between himself and the Adjutant-General of the British forces, Major John André. The commander, Sir Henry Clinton, approved the correspondence and scanned the various letters that passed between "Gustavus" and "John Anderson." When Clinton

learned the rank of his American correspondent and the position he occupied he was anxious to bring the negotiations to an end, fearing that the union of the Americans and French might make the purchase of Benedict Arnold unprofitable and undesirable. The absence of Washington from the Highlands seemed to be the most suitable opportunity for the necessary interview between the betrayer of his trust and the man willing to tempt him.

For this purpose the British sloop-of-war, the *Vulture*, sailed up the Hudson to Verplanck's Point having Major André as a passenger. It was arranged by Gen. Arnold that the meeting should be held near the house of Mr. Joshua Hett Smith, two miles below Stony Point, and take place on Thursday, September 21st, at night.

Mr. Smith was a gentleman highly respected and of much local influence. He had been able at various times to obtain private and special information from New York of great advantage to Washington and other Continental commanders. It is not probable that any suspicion of the actual purpose of Arnold entered his mind or that he was an enemy of America. Upon some of the unexpected occurrences connected with this interview and the result, this Memoir need not dwell at length.

The cannonade from Verplanck's Point which caused the *Vulture* to drop lower down the river, the necessity which compelled Major André in leaving the American lines to make a land journey to New York under a pass from Gen. Arnold; his lack of coolness and prudence when stopped by the self-appointed vigilants of the "Neutral Ground"; the stupidity of Col. Jameson in communicating with Gen. Arnold; the keen astuteness of Major Tallmadge in learning the rank and purpose of Major André; the sending by special messenger to Washington, information of his important capture and the incriminating papers he had concealed; were features of a scheme that if carried

out as intended would have prolonged the war and tried the patience and endurance of the people.

It was under the weight of this terrible secret that Arnold received the aides on that bright September day, with outward cordiality but inward trembling, and even Mrs. Arnold's cheerful and witty conversation could not remove from him an apprehension that the unexpected early return of Washington from Hartford would lead to a discovery of his treachery.

The delivery to him while at the table of Col. Jameson's letter announcing the capture of "John Anderson" and the forwarding of his papers to the Commander-in-Chief; his abrupt departure from the room and quick return to announce his intention of visiting West Point to prepare for its inspection by Washington; the frenzy of Mrs. Arnold and precipitate flight of Gen. Arnold; the surprise and perplexity of Washington to find no commandant at West Point and not to receive the proper salute; the arrival at the Robinson house of the travel-stained messenger who had gone as far as Danbury on his way to Hartford with the dispatches for Washington; the opening of them by Col. Hamilton and the consternation they aroused; the return of Washington and the rest of the party and the disclosure to him of the shameful proceeding, are incidents of that beautiful September Sunday morning which destroyed the peace and quiet of the day of rest. Washington's control of himself was remarkable and he was outwardly calm. Taking Gen. Knox and the Marquis de La Fayette into his confidence and sadly exclaiming: "Whom can we now trust?" he took energetic measures to arrest Arnold, dispatching Hamilton as soon as the necessary papers could be made out to endeavour to overtake him before he reached the *Vulture*. André was ordered to be brought under a strong guard to the Robinson house, but was not seen by Washington. From

there he was conducted to Tappan and confined in a large room in "the '76 Stone House" under a double guard. So carefully did Washington provide against any attempt to escape that he ordered two officers with drawn swords to be always in the room and the sentries constantly on the watch and relieved at frequent intervals.

His capture had created an almost greater sensation than even the treason of Arnold. He was almost indispensable to Sir Henry Clinton; a favourite with his brother officers, he held the pen of a ready writer and could quickly indite a sweet sonnet or ballad, or discourse learnedly upon some point of military science or literature; his artistic taste was shown in many pen and ink sketches which were both graphic and suggestive. In society his graceful carriage, polished manners, and witty sayings made him to all the Tory maidens in Philadelphia and New York "the mould of fashion and the glass of form."

All the younger officers in the Highlands soon succumbed to his charms and felt for him both affection and pity. He was then in his twenty-ninth year, and had all the ambition and enthusiasm of youth and also many of the qualities that mark the good soldier.

Strong efforts were made to effect his release and to mitigate his offence of being within the American lines without the protection of a flag of truce. Sir Henry Clinton pleaded for him, and appealed to the well-known clemency of Washington. Even Arnold, with great effrontery, argued that the pass given to "John Anderson" by him when still commandant at West Point was sufficient protection and told Washington that André could not be treated as a spy. The personal dignity and manly bearing of Major André impressed the Commander-in-Chief, and he treated him with courtesy and consideration, but he also knew that his offence could not be condoned, for then there would be an end of all discipline, if he were

not firm in applying to it the rule of civilized warfare. Washington convened at Tappan on September 29th, a Court of Inquiry, composed of the ablest and most judicial of his general officers of the main body of the Continental army. Its members were Gen. Greene, Lord Stirling, Gen. St. Clair, Marquis de La Fayette, Gen. Robert Howe, Baron Von Steuben, and Brigadier Generals Parsons, James Clinton, Knox, Huntington, Glover, Patterson and Stark; Col. James Laurens was the Judge Advocate General and Gen. Greene was the President of the Board.

There was a scrupulous desire to give the accused all the rights to which he was entitled and to make the inquiry full and exact.

The high-minded Major, however, by his statement of his movements from September 20th, to the time of his capture, made the presence of witnesses unnecessary and after due deliberation the Board determined: "That Major André, Adjutant General of the British Army ought to be considered as a spy from the enemy, and that agreeably to the law and usage of Nations, it is their opinion that he ought to suffer death."

With unfeigned sorrow and regret the Commander-in-Chief approved the sentence. A delay of one day was granted before it was carried into effect that a delegation from Sir Henry Clinton might lay before Washington some considerations which possibly would modify the sentence. Gen. James Robertson, Lieut. Gov. Andrew Elliott and Chief Justice William Smith proceeded in the *Greyhound* with a flag of truce to Dobbs Ferry. Here Gen. Greene met Gen. Robertson unofficially; the others not being military men were not allowed to land. The conference was long, but no new facts were brought out which could take from the Adjutant-General the odium of being within the American lines without a flag of truce,

and thus by all military law a spy. On October 2d, Major André was executed by hanging. He was brave, collected and calm, and the execution which was witnessed by many officers and soldiers affected them deeply.

Few incidents of the war are tinged with deeper shades of sadness than this. No occasion more severely tested the conflict between Washington's inclination and his sense of duty.

The part borne in these transactions by Col. Humphreys does not appear from any available documents. But as one of the General's aides and a personal friend of Col. Wadsworth he undoubtedly went to Hartford, where his knowledge of French was probably of service. The subjoined letter appears to be conclusive on this point: written to a friend of his in Connecticut, probably Col. Wadsworth, the Colonel expresses himself as follows:

HEAD QUARTERS NEAR
PASSAIC FALLS
Oct° 28th 1780

MY DEAR SIR,

. . . What a scene of horror has displayed itself since I saw you last! Arnold has now become like a twice told tale of infamy and so let him sink in perdition tho not oblivion.

The Proceedings of the Board of General Officers on Major André are published by Order of Congress.—There is also a handsome account of the whole affair written by a friend of ours (Col. H——n)[1] & printed in the Philadelphia Papers--To these let me refer you.

The plan for reducing the number of Regiments in service is at last compleated, and Congress have resolved to give half pay to the reduced as well other Officers of the Army for life,—General Parsons is promoted to be a Major General.

I am happy to learn from Col. Meigs that the Assembly of

[1] Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton and Humphreys were at this time Washington's aides.

Connecticut are taking up the affairs of the Army with Spirit. I know it is unnecessary to impress on you the necessity of having an Army for the War & Magazines to subsist it; had this been the case, His Excellency's Letter I am sure would have superseded this necessity. . . . For Heaven's sake let us have an Army for the War, or no Army at all. . . . A few days will point out the necessity of looking out for Winter Quarters. You shall hear from me anon.

Your most Obedt Hble Servt

D. HUMPHRYS.[1]

In the exciting and distressing scenes that followed the return he would find full occupation in preparing necessary papers, in reporting to his chief the deliberations of the Court, and with his associates in the military family of Washington admiring the talents and sympathizing with the sufferings of Major André.

Col. Humphreys only briefly alludes to this event in his *Life of Putnam:* "The British, who considered this post as a sort of American Gibraltar, never attempted it but by the treachery of an American officer. All the world knows that this project failed."[2]

He probably could give to Washington some details of the life of Benedict Arnold in New Haven, as he was the only one of the aides who had lived there. Many young men of family and position had the noble ambition to be useful to their country, not only in the ranks and as subordinate officers, but desired to secure thorough military science by serving the Commander-in-Chief as aides. Among them was Thomas Wooster, a college companion of Col. Humphreys, and a graduate of Yale in 1768. He was a son of that brave veteran Gen. David Wooster who was killed at Redding Ridge. Capt. Wooster served under his

[1] Published from the collection of George Brinley. Dawson's *Historical Magazine*, Second Series, vol. i., p. 204.

[2] Humphreys' *Putnam*, Edition of 1788.

father as aide in the fall of 1775 upon the borders of Westchester County. In January 1777 he was commissioned as Captain in Col. Samuel B. Webb's "additional" regiment and was with it on the Hudson and in Rhode Island during 1777 and 1778. From November 7, to June 1, 1779, he was upon a furlough, at the expiration of which he left the army. A letter to Col. Webb from him declares that he did not draw his "supernumerary" pay as an officer during his furlough "as I did not enter the service for the sake of pay or rank, and imagine I should not have quitted it till the war was over, if you had not been so unfortunate as to be taken from it." He entered into business but his application to Washington shows that there was still military ardour in him. Gen. Washington's reply does not seem to be extant. Its nature can be imagined from this letter of Col. Humphreys:

HEADQUARTERS, October 24th, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

It was not until within these two days that I have been favoured with your letter of the 8th inst. That which you mention to have sent *enclosing the money* has not yet come to hand: and I fear it will not, unless some extraordinary precautions were taken to make the bearer accountable for it. I have not yet had occasion for the money, but shall in a few days. You will see by his Excellency's letter to you the reason why he could not accept of your proposal. He expressed to me in conversation his entire satisfaction as to your character and abilities; his unhappiness in not being able to gratify you, repeating the names of the Gentlemen whose services he had previously declined, and discovered a delicate apprehension lest you should consider the matter in any improper point of view Tho' the reasons for his conduct, I am confident will be satisfactory to you.

It gives me real concern that I am not likely to be made happy with your Company as I had flattered myself.

We have nothing new of any consequence.

My compliments wait on Mrs. Wooster and my other friends of your acquaintance.

Believe me to be, Dear Sir,

Your most obdt. Hble. Servt.

D. Humphreys.

Thomas Wooster, Esq.

Endorsement:

To Thomas Wooster, Esq.

New Haven.

After the Revolution young Wooster removed to New Orleans. It was on a voyage to his new home from New Haven, in 1792, that he was lost at sea.[1]

Washington, after strengthening the garrison at West Point, which was put under the command of Gen. Heath, removed the main body of the northern army to the Passaic hills, and again occupied Col. Dey's house as headquarters. Here was once more carefully planned an attack upon the forts of the enemy near Kingsbridge in the upper part of Manhattan Island. If there seemed to be a favourable opportunity and the garrison of New York was not increased it was intended to make a bold dash for the city. The younger officers had chafed under the inactivity of the campaign. La Fayette was particularly anxious for some hostile demonstration, fearing that the present course would be misunderstood and injure the American cause in his own country. As Gen. Washington had always desired to make an attack upon New York he thought the present time when Sir Henry Clinton would probably send large detachments to strengthen the army in the South under Lord Cornwallis most opportune. The ultimate design of Gen. Washington was known to very few.

The amiable and learned Marquis de Chastellux, one

[1] Prof. Henry P. Johnston's *Yale in the Revolution*, p. 250.

of the Major-Generals in the French army under Comte de Rochambeau, was occupying his leisure in travelling in those parts of the country where he could go with safety. He was an acute observer, versed in military science, and desirous of observing carefully the work of the great American commander. He visited Washington at the Dey house while spending some days with his relative, La Fayette. A few days previously a memoir had been prepared upon the feasibility of securing New York by an attack upon Kingsbridge and Fort Washington. The subject was discussed at headquarters by Washington, La Fayette and others, in a general way, in the presence of the traveller, who had been graciously received and invited to join the company at the General's table. The Marquis has given a detailed and lively description of the dinner, the conversation, and his impressions of the American chief whom he then saw for the first time.[1]

The carrying into execution of the plan was entrusted to General Heath, who received confidential orders by word of mouth from Col. Humphreys. In the papers of Col. Pickering, Quartermaster-General, is a letter written by Col. Humphreys as aide-de-camp dated November 6, 1780, requesting him to provide carriages for the transportation of boats.[2] It was the intention that a "grand" forage should be made under the command of Gen. Stark. Several small parties also were to be sent on expeditions.

It was planned that all should meet the main army at Kingsbridge. The Colonel thus explains the design of this movement:

[1] For La Fayette's "Memoirs," see *The Writings of Washington, Being His Correspondence, Addresses, Messages and Other Papers, Official and Private, with a Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations*, by Jared Sparks, Russell &c., Boston, 1835, vol. viii., p. 538. For a summary of the Marquis de Chastellux's visit, see Irving's *Washington*, vol. iv., pp. 177, 181.

[2] "Index to Pickering Papers," in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, p. 226.

A multitude of proofs might be produced to demonstrate that military facts cannot always be accurately known but by the Commander-in-Chief and his confidential officers. The Marquis de Chastelleux (whose opportunity to acquire general information, respecting those parts of the American war which he hath casually mentioned, was better than that of any other writer) gives an account of a *grand Forage* which Gen. Heath ordered to be made towards Kingsbridge in the autumn of 1780. The Marquis, who was present when the detachment marched, and to whom Gen. Heath shewed the orders given to General Stark, the commanding officer of the expedition, observes that he had never seen, in manuscript, or print, more pertinent instructions. Now the fact is, that this detachment, under pretext of a forage was intended by the Commander-in-Chief to co-operate with the main army, in an attempt against the enemy's posts on York-Island; and that General Heath himself was then ignorant of the real design. The Commander-in-Chief spent a whole campaign in ripening this project. Boats, mounted on travelling carriages, were kept constantly with the army. The Marquis de La Fayette, at the head of the Light Infantry, was to have made the attack in the night on Fort Washington. The period chosen for this enterprise was the very time when the army were to break up their camp and march into winter-quarters; so that the Commander-in-Chief, moving in the dusk of the evening, would have been on the banks of the Hudson, with his whole force, to have supported the attack. The cautious manner in which the co-operation on the part of the troops sent by General Heath, on the pretended forage, was to have been conducted, will be understood from the following secret instructions:

To Brigadier General Stark
Headquarters, Passaic Falls, Nov. 21, 1780.

Sir:

Colonel Humphreys, one of my Aides-de-Camp, is charged by me with orders of a private and particular nature, which he

is to deliver to you, and which you are to obey. He will inform you of the necessity of this mode of communication.

I am, Sir, &c.

G. WASHINGTON.

To Lieut. Col. David Humphreys, A. D. Camp

SIR:

You are immediately to proceed to West Point and communicate the business committed to you, *in confidence*, to Major Heath, and to no other person whatsoever; from thence you will repair to the detachment at the Whit Plains on Friday next, taking measures to prevent their leaving that place, before you get to them. And in the course of the succeeding night you may inform the commanding officer of the enterprise in contemplation against the enemy's posts on York-Island. As the troops are constantly to lie on their arms, no previous notice should be given; but they may be put in motion precisely at 4 o'clock, and commence a slow and regular march to King's Bridge, until they shall discover or be informed of the concerted signals being made—when the march must be pressed with the greatest rapidity. Parties of horse should be sent forward to keep a look out for the signals. Although the main body ought to be kept intact, patroles of horse and light parties might be sent towards East and West Chester, and upon the signals being discovered Sheldon's regiment and the Connecticut State troops (which may also be put in motion as soon as the orders can be communicated after 4 o'clock) should be pushed forward to intercept any of the enemy, who may attempt to gain Frog's Neck, and to cut off the Refugee-corps at Morrissania. A few men, with some address, may spread such an alarm as to prevent an attempt of the enemy to retreat to Frog's Neck, from an apprehension of surrounding parties. You will communicate these instructions to the commanding officer of the detachment, who, upon his approach to King's Bridge, will receive orders from me as early as possible. Should the signals not be discovered, the troops will halt at least six miles from the bridge, until further intelligence can be obtained. The

absolute necessity of the most perfect secrecy is the occasion of communicating my orders through this channel.

Given at Head Quarters, Passaic Falls, this 22d. day of Nov. 1780.
G. Washington.

Never was a plan better arranged, and never did the circumstances promise more sure or complete success. The British were not only unalarmed, but our troops were likewise entirely misguided in their expectations. The accidental intervention of some prevented at this time the attempt, which was more than once resumed afterwards. Notwithstanding this favourite project was not ultimately effected, it was evidently not less bold in conception or feasible in accomplishment, than that attempted so successfully at Trenton; or than that which was brought to so glorious an issue in the successful siege of Yorktown.

It is true the Marquis de Chastellux, whose professional knowledge and fountain-head intelligence have enabled him to describe several actions better than they are elsewhere described, speaks in this instance of an ulterior object, and says that secrets were preserved more inviolable in the American than in the French army. His words are: "C'est que le secret est gardé tres exactement a l'armée Amèricaine; peu de personnes ont part à la confiance du Chef, et en general on y parle moins que dans les armées Françaises des operations de la guerre, et de ce que l'on appelle chez nous *les Nouvelles.*"[1]

At the last moment Washington was compelled to abandon his well matured plans and accordingly issued the following order to Colonel Humphreys:

To Lieut. Col. David Humphreys, A. D. Camp

Head Quarters, Nov. 24, 1780.

Dear Sir,

Some intelligence having been received from New York unfavourable to the project I had in contemplation, I have

[1] *Life of Putnam*, p. 247, note. The instructions to Colonel Humphreys are also given in Sparks' *Washington*, vol. vii., pp. 306, 307.

relinquished it, and am to desire the detachment under General Stark will discontinue its co-operations and take such measures as are necessary for its security and for making the Forage originally intended.

I am, with great Regard &c.,

G. WASHINGTON.

At the close of this year, 1780, the Continental Army was reorganized by the consolidation of the regiments of the several State "Lines." The number was reduced, as Humphreys states in his letter of October 28, 1780. The eight or nine regiments of Connecticut were re-arranged in five battalions, with a general transfer of many of the officers. Humphreys, who had been borne on the rolls for the past three years as Captain in the Sixth Regiment, was assigned to the new Fourth Regiment commanded by Col. Zebulon Butler. It is an interesting fact, seldom referred to in histories of the Revolutionary War, that a considerable number of negroes enlisted in the Continental Army. Two months after the battle of Monmouth, in 1778, Adjutant-General Scammell made a return of such troops then in the army. They were enrolled in fourteen different regiments and represented several States. Five hundred and eighty-six were in active service, out of a total muster of seven hundred and fifty-two. There were about one hundred of them scattered throughout the fifty or more companies in the Connecticut Line. When the above consolidation took place however, going into effect on January 1, 1781, the Connecticut negro soldiers appear to have been brought together into one company in Colonel Butler's regiment and put under the nominal command of Col. Humphreys. It is a tradition that he was one of the first men in the country to recognize the possibilities of the negro as a soldier, and by his own influence and that of his faithful body-servant, Jethro

Martin, among people of his own race, created much enthusiasm for the cause of freedom among the negroes of Connecticut, who were largely household servants.[1]

The following is the roll of Captain Humphreys' consolidated negro company in 1781–83; as given in the official record of Connecticut men in the Revolution, published by the Adjutant-General, Hartford. It may contain many a gallant name which should be rescued from oblivion:

The Negro Company

Jack Arabas	Bristol Baker	Peter Mix
Casar Bagden	Hearper Camp	Job Casar
Casar Chapman	Timothy Casar	Pomp Cyrus
Sampson Cuff	James Dinor	Jube Dyer
Ned Freedom	Cuff Freedom	Peter Freeman
Prinnis Freeman	Peter Gibbs	Prince George
Andrew Jack	Prince Johnson	Shubael Johnson
Alexander Judd	Peter Lyon	Pomp Liberty
Jeffery Liberty	Sharp Liberty	Cuff Liberty
Jack Little	Lewis Martin	Jesse Otis
John Rogers	Sharp Rogers	Cato Robinson
Solomon Soutree	Jeffery Sill	William Sowers
Ezekiel Tuphand	Hector Williams	Harry Williams
Cato Williams	Dick Violett	Jube Freeman
Dick Freedom	Congo Jack (?)	Pomp McCuff
London Sawyer	Simon Rose	Pomp Edore

[1] *The National Portrait Gallery*, vol. ii., states that "Humphreys, when in active service, had given the sanction of his name and influence in the establishment of a Company, of *Coloured* infantry attached to Meigs', afterwards Butler's regiment, in the Connecticut Line. He continued to be the nominal Captain until the establishment of peace." The Connecticut Revolutionary rolls fail to show a negro company in Meigs' regiment. Rhode Island tried the experiment of raising a black regiment, but its numbers never exceeded one hundred and forty, and later in the war negroes were not enlisted. See S. S. Rider's *An Historical Inquiry Concerning the attempt to raise a Regiment of Slaves by Rhode Island During the War of the Revolution*, R. I. Historical Tracts, No. 10, Providence, 1880.

CHAPTER XI

Washington and the French Officers

Surrender of Fort George—Washington's Headquarters at New Windsor—Humphreys' Attempt to Seize Knyphausen or Clinton—General Heath's Account—Its Failure—Col. Laurens Appointed Envoy to France—The Mutinies of Pennsylvania and Jersey Troops—Gen. Knox's Visit to the New England States—Humphreys' Mission to Connecticut—His Report to Washington—Report of the French Officers—Visit of Washington to Newport—And Hartford—Sailing of French Fleet for Virginia—Washington's Return to Windsor—La Fayette Sent to Join Gen. Greene in the South—Arrival of Count de Barras—Washington's Visit to the French Commanders at Wethersfield—Washington's Circular to Governors of New England States—Camp at Dobbs Ferry—Failure to Surprise the British Outposts—Arrival at East Chester of de Lauzun—Visit of Congressional Committee to Washington—French Fleet Goes to Chesapeake instead of to New York—Loan of Twenty Thousand Dollars by de Rochambeau—Washington Transfers Bulk of Army to the South—Humphreys' Letter to Gen. Lincoln—Allied Forces Pass through Philadelphia—Arrival of French Fleet in the Chesapeake—And of Col. Laurens with the French Subsidy—Entry of Washington and de Rochambeau in Baltimore—Washington with Humphreys Revisits Mount Vernon—Washington Entertains the French Officers—Goes to Williamsburg—Meets Admiral de Grasse—British Fortifications at Yorktown—Outposts Occupied by American and French Troops—Death of Alexander Scammel—Epitaph on him by Humphreys—British Position Carried—Cornwallis' Request for a Cessation of Hostilities—It is Granted—Terms of Capitulation Accepted by Cornwallis.

TO Washington and all those who knew its real object, it was a very great disappointment to be compelled to abandon his well-matured plan of an attack on New

York. Two details of it were, however, successfully accomplished. Gen. Stark with twenty-five hundred men went upon what is termed "a general forage." Col. Benjamin Tallmadge with eighty men, on the evening of November 22d, crossed over Long Island Sound and proceeded to Coram. They attacked Fort George, which after a very slight resistance surrendered. The whole garrison of fifty-two men and officers were made prisoners. As there seemed to be no special reason for keeping the troops in the summer encampment they went into winter-quarters. With the exception of the New York "Line" which was stationed at Albany to repel any attack from Canada, the northern army formed an almost continuous line from West Point to Morristown. The New England troops were stationed in the Highlands on both sides of the Hudson in the neighbourhood of West Point, the New Jersey contingent on the Pompton hills, and the Pennsylvania Line was at Morristown. To be within convenient distance of the main portion of his army the General took for his headquarters a low-roofed old Dutch farmhouse at New Windsor a few miles above West Point. Towards the close of November, Lady Washington joined him and thus added to the pleasure and comfort of her husband and all in his household.

Many distinguished visitors found in its small rooms when they had entered through the half-door a welcome and a grace of manner, a hospitality refined and abundant which was not always seen in the courts of the old world. The desire to have the year distinguished for events other than treasonable and a possible expectation that Gen. Arnold might be given up to the Americans led Col. Humphreys to propose a small expedition which should proceed secretly to New York and capture Sir Henry Clinton or Gen. Knyphausen. This required co-operation on the part of friends in the city. The arrangements for

Benj.ª Talmadge

it were made with much care. Col. Humphreys chose for his assistants Capt. Roger Welles of Col. Webb's Connecticut regiment and Lieut. Hart. An order from headquarters on December 16, 1780, directed Col. Pickering to have the proper boats, oars and material for muffling them. The Commander-in-Chief issued to his aide these instructions:

To Lieut. Col. David Humphreys:
Instructions:

You will take command of such of the detachments of waterguards now on the river as you may think necessary, and with them attempt to surprise General Knyphausen from Morris's House on York Island, or Sir Henry Clinton from Kennedy's House in the city, if from the tide, weather, and other circumstances you shall judge the enterprise practicable. In the execution of it you will be guided by your own discretion; and I have only to suggest that secrecy, rapidity, and prudence in making good your retreat will be indispensably necessary to insure success.

Given at Head Quarters,
23 of December, 1780.[1]

The expedition set out in a barge and two whaleboats from Dobbs Ferry on Christmas evening, 1780. Through high winds they were not able to land as intended; one of the boats was driven down to Sandy Hook and another was stranded on Staten Island. Finally they all made Brunswick, and from that place the Colonel with his officers and men returned to camp. Gen. Heath gives this account in his *Memoirs*[2]:

On the 25th inst. Major Humphreys, aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief, went towards New York on an enter-

[1] Sparks' *Washington*, vol. vii., p. 338.

[2] *Memoirs of Major General William Heath*, by J. Thomas and E. T. Andrews, Boston, Aug., 1798. New Edition, edited by William Abatt, New York, 1901, p. 247.

prise; he was attended by Captain Welles, of the Connecticut Line, Lieut. Hart, Ensign McCalpin, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. McGuyer, and twenty-four non-commissioned officers and privates, in one barge and two whale-boats. The wind was very fresh at north-west in the night, and the boats were forced past the city and one of them almost down to Sandy Hook. One of the boats put in at Staten Island; at length the three went round to Brunswick, from thence the major and all the others returned to the army on 1st of January.

A partial knowledge of this plan was communicated to Sir Henry Clinton by one of his spies in the American camp. His letter is found in Sir Henry Clinton's "Secret record of private daily Intelligence" now in the possession of Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet, of New York City, portions of which with annotations by Mr. Edward F. DeLancey were published in the *Magazine of American History*.

The informant says:

A most daring enterprise has been lately concerted at the quarters of the Chieftain here. It was no less than an attempt to take the Commander-in-Chief in his quarters in the city—a certain Col. Humphreys, one of the Chief's aides-de-camp, was to have gone down the River with a party and land behind Kennedy's house, thence proceed up through the garden and secrete themselves behind the house, whilst some were to advance on each side of it, and seize the sentries in the street, upon which a signal was to be given those on the back of the house, to crash in with crowbars and take his Excellency with all his papers. Some traitors in the city were to know the night and hour of attack and were likewise to seize the adjacent sentries on receiving the signal. To facilitate this mad project a captain's command was to land at Greenwich and march to Knyphausen's quarters as well for the purpose of making an alarm as to take him. However romantic this may seem, yet I can assure you that it has been attempted to be put into execution. This

Humphreys is quite sanguine of succeeding in some convenient season.[1]

It is noted with some surprise that Mr. DeLancey does not refer to the authentic notices of Col. Humphreys' bold attempt, but makes it the occasion of this general observation:

"This plan may perhaps have been the origin of the Sergeant Champe story, the alleged attempt to seize Arnold in New York, which like the baseless Lydia Darragh story of Philadelphia, is believed by some to be one of the many myths of American history."[2]

The empty Continental treasury, the short enlistments of the men, the lack of power in the Continental Congress to compel the States to furnish their quotas to recruit the army, the depreciation of the currency and the inability to secure even that to pay the troops, the failure of the commissary department, were still grave obstacles to any success in the field. The Congress had grown wise in its own conceit and thought that it could judge of the military ability of the various officers, map out the campaigns in its legislative hall and then have them executed by its chosen commanders. The crushing defeat of

[1] Extract of a letter from McClelland, of Red Hook on the Hudson, to his brother, January 29, 1781, rec'd January 31st, *Magazine of American History*, x., pp. 413, 414. Mr. DeLancey notes that the Kennedy house, which was No. 1 Broadway, was only pulled down in May, 1882. He gives General Knyphausen's residence as being "on the North side of Wall next to William." He allows the possibility of that General temporarily taking up his quarters at Richmond Hill not far from Greenwich village. The Morris House, known better as the Jumel Mansion, is on the line of One Hundred and Sixty-second Street, overlooking the Harlem River.

[2] The story of John Champe, of Virginia, who in order to capture the traitor was to enlist in his loyalist corps, is gracefully told by Washington Irving in his *Washington*, iv., pp. 166–169. It is given at greater length in Mr. Benson J. Lossing's *Field Book of the American Revolution*, ii., pp. 206–210. Mr. Lossing bases his account upon the "Memoirs" of Col. Henry Lee's *Washington* (1827) in whose corps Champe served.

Gen. Gates, a congressional appointment without consultation with Washington, at Camden, South Carolina, on August 16, 1780, by Lord Cornwallis showed that body its error. The persistent representations of the Commander-in-Chief, enforced by the discontent of the troops with their insufficient food and clothing, and their large arrears of pay, finally led Congress to listen to the proposal that a special envoy should be sent to France to solicit a large loan and also obtain more men and ships. It was a mission pecularly delicate and arduous. France had shown her good-will in sending the forces already in America, and the constant new levies that replenished the British army could not be met by soldiers enfeebled and half clad.

Congress, with rare good sense, left the selection to Washington, who suggested his former aide, Col. John Laurens, who was duly appointed on December 28, 1780. Before his departure, Col. Laurens followed his own inclination and the instruction of Congress and passed some days with Washington. In a letter to Col. Pickering from Col. Humphreys, the delay of the General in answering a communication of that officer is explained by the fact that he was busy preparing dispatches for Col. Laurens.[1]

The great need of such aid as he was to seek was seen soon after in the open mutiny of the Pennsylvania Line, which was quelled only by an official visit of Gen. Reed, President of Pennsylvania, and promises to yield to their just demands for wages and clothing. An attempted mutiny in the Jersey Line it was thought would be treated in the same way, but the Commander-in-Chief saw that such arguments between States and their troops would

[1] "Index to Pickering Papers," p. 226. The available authorities for the mission of Col. Laurens are: Marshall's *Washington*, iv., pp. 407–410; Irving's *Washington*, iv., pp. 210, 212, 287, 288, 289; Lossing's *Field Book*, ii., p. 857.

soon destroy all discipline, and it was summarily dealt with by the execution of two of its ringleaders.

Engrossed as he was with the affairs of his own immediate army and the Northern situation generally, Washington did not forget the tireless and faithful Greene in the South. He sent him all the news, and encouraging words, as the two following letters testify. Both of them appear in Col. Humphreys' handwriting and were doubtless amplified by him from Washington's first draft:

HEAD QUARTERS NEAR PASSAIC FALLS
Nov. 8th, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

I am favoured with your letter of the 31st of October & am pleased to find your appointment so agreeable to the views and wishes of Congress.

So fully sensible have I long been of the distressed situation not only of the Army in this quarter, but also at the Southward, and of all our great departments, from the embarrassed *state of our finances*, that it has been not only a constant subject of representation, in the strongest terms to Congress, and the States individually; but particularly so to the Minister of France at our last interview; and that a foreign Loan was absolutely necessary to retrieve our Affairs. My ideas therefore must have been exceedingly misapprehended by him, or his, by the Baron Steuben.

I entirely approve of your plan for forming a flying Army. And in addition to this (if the Enemy should continue to harass those parts of Virginia that are intersected with large navigable Rivers) I would recommend the building of a number of flat bottomed Boats of so large a construction as can be conveniently transported on Carriages—this I conceive might be of great utility by furnishing the means to take advantage of the Enemy's situation in crossing those Rivers which would be otherwise impassable. I have also written to Governor Jefferson on the subject.

If a spirit of Patriotism or even of true policy animates the

Merchants and men of Property in the Southern States a subscription may be attended with success—at least the experiment can do no injury.

General Knox has received directions to send forward the Company of Artillery. An Order will be given for the Thousand stand of Arms.

Since writing the above I have received your favour of the 3rd instant.

Lieutenant Colonel Laurens will have heard of his exchange before this time, and is at liberty to go to the Southward if he thinks proper.

With respect to the power, Congress have invested you with to make exchanges. I should suppose it regarded the Prisoners taken in the Southern Department, on the usual principles, without involving the Convention Troops, or any further Northward. A pretty extensive exchange has just taken place in this quarter.

It will be impossible from the non arrival of the French Arms, and the scarcity in the eastern States, to furnish those requested by you. Nor do I think the Legion of the Duke de Lauzun can be detached from the French Army. The Fleet of Arbuthnot which still blocks that of France, in the Harbour of New Port, effectually prevents the execution of the other plan.

Our last advices from the Northward mention another incursion of the enemy from Canada, in greater force—in consequence of which the remainder of York Brigade is ordered thither.

There are reports that an embarkation is about to be made at New York. But the accounts are vague and contradictory, and the fact not yet ascertained.

I have to request you will be pleased to send by a Flag of Truce the inclosed letter to Brigadier General DuPortail who is exchanged.

I am Dear Sir
With great regard & esteem
Your most Obedient
& very Hble Servant
(Signed) Gº. Washington.

Major General Greene.

HEAD QUARTERS NEW WINDSOR
Jan'ry 9th, 1781.

DEAR SIR:

I have been duly favoured with your Letters of the 7th and 8th of December, together with the Returns of the Army under your command.

It is impossible for any one to sympathize more feelingly with you, in the suffering and distresses of the Troops than I do and nothing could aggravate your unhappiness so much as the want of ability to remedy or even alleviate the calamities they suffer, and in which we participate but too largely. None of the Clothing so long expected from France has yet arrived we are compelled therefore to have recourse to the States, and the supplies are very inadequate to our wants. Should the French Clothing be brought in, you may depend upon having a full proportion of it. You will be pursuaded in the mean time, that I am perfectly sensible, of the innumerable embarrassments and hardships you have to struggle with, in such an exhausted Country, and that I should be happy to be able to afford the wished relief.

The brilliant action of General Sumpter, and the stratagem of Colonel Washington deserve great commendation—it gives me inexpressible pleasure to find that such a spirit of enterprise and intrepidity still prevails.

I was much surprised that any dispute about Rank was like to arise between the Baron Steuben and General Smallwood. Nor can I conceive upon what principles the latter can found his claims of seniority; for if that date of his *Commission* is to be carried back to any given period previous to his appointment; it may supersede not only that of the Officer now in question, but many others, and indeed derange and throw into confusion the rank of the whole Line of Major Generals. But as the services of the Baron may be extremely necessary in Virginia, it may not be amiss for him to continue there till the principles of Major General Smallwood on the subject, are more clearly ascertained, and a decision is made by Congress if the dispute cannot otherwise be determined.

The preposterous conduct of those concerned in releasing instead of exchanging the Prisoners lately taken to the Southward, is really astonishing. I had entertained hopes that a considerable number of our Prisoners in Charles-town, might have been obtained for them. In this quarter an extensive exchange has taken place, we have few Officers, and no Privates remaining in the hands of the Enemy.

I advised you on the 2nd ins't of the sailing of a Fleet from New York with about 1600 Troops on board. Nothing has been heard respecting it since.

I am extremely sorry to inform you of the defection of the Pennsylvania Line. On the first instant a Mutiny was raised by the Non-Commissioned Officers & Soldiers, in attempting to quell this tumult in the first instance, several lives were lost. The Mutineers moved off to Prince Town with their Arms & six pieces of Artillery under pretext of Marching to Philadelphia in a Body to demand a redress of their grievances—but they cannot be induced by Gen'l Wayne who has come to them, to pass the Delaware. Their demands are exorbitant & tend to the immediate dissolution of the Line. On the contrary unless they are complied with, there is great danger of their falling to the Enemy, who have sent Emissaries to tamper with them. It is however a happy circumstance, that the remainder of the Troops have given no signs of defection, though it is uncertain how far they would act against those in Revolt. God only knows what will be the consequence, or what can be done, in this critical dilemma. All reason, authority & personal influence seem to be lost upon them.

I am Dear Sir
With very great regard & esteem
Your Most Obedient
Humble Servant
(Signed) Gº WASHINGTON.[1]

P. S. Jan'ry 11th 7 o'clock A.M.

I cannot suffer the Post to depart without adding the favourable intelligence last Night rec'd by Express from Tren-

[1] United States Archives, State Department, Washington.

ton. The Pennsylvanians have given an unequivocal & decided mark of attachment to our cause & detestation of the Enemy's conduct by delivering up the Negotiator sent by Gen'l Clinton to treat with them, together with his Guide & papers. A Court Martial is ordered for his Trial. These are favourable indications that the affair may yet be happily settled.

It will ever give me pleasure to hear from you, on matters of business or friendship; being with sentiments of perfect esteem and regard, My Dear Sir

Your Most Obed't and
Humble Servant
(Signed) Gº Washington.

Major Gen. Greene.

In providing for the needs of his army, Washington placed great confidence in the exertions of the Governors of the New England States to obtain funds to pay the troops, to purchase clothing, and to assist in provisioning the army. He thought that a mere express bearing a formal dispatch upon the neglect was insufficient in this emergency.

Gen. Knox, a citizen of Boston, highly esteemed by all who knew him, and the confidant of Washington, was sent as his personal representative to the Governors, to lay before them the exact condition of the Army and present a circular letter in which the General said: "The aggravated calamities and distresses that have resulted from the total want of pay for nearly twelve months, the want of clothing at a very severe season, and not unfrequently the want of provisions, are beyond description," and urged them to immediate action.[1] Gen. Knox wrote to his chief on February 7th. He stated

[1] Stuart's *Trumbull*, p. 518. Col. John Trumbull, a careful observer, notes that at this time the credit of the United States in Europe was much impaired "by the mismanagement of her affairs in that department." *Ibid.*

that he had visited all the New England States, and found the people "well principled in the contest, and fully determined to make every sacrifice of property and personal ease to insure the happy termination of the war. The universal sentiment was that the army ought to be supported and should be supported at every reasonable expense."[1]

The legislatures of Connecticut and Rhode Island were not in session. He had a long conversation with Gov. Trumbull of Connecticut, who with his Council had been clothed with full legislative powers during the recess of the General Assembly. He fully concurred in the opinions expressed by Gen. Knox and thought a special session of the Assembly unnecessary, as he promised to call together his Council immediately. He also thought the proposed "Gratuity of three half Johannes" was preferable to

any pay in paper money as a matter that would be more efficacious to quiet the minds of the troops and render them happy; and also as a measure which the New England States could execute with as much ease, under present circumstances, as the three months' real pay in paper money.[2]

He was clearly of opinion, that to obtain both the gratuity and the three months' pay would be to attempt more than could be performed consistently with their present exertions in order to put their finances on a tolerable footing.[3]

Gen. Knox met on the following day with the Governor and his Council. He explained in detail the objects of his mission; and the Council immediately resolved upon the sale of confiscated Tory estates to obtain the necessary

[1] Stuart's *Trumbull*, p. 519.

[2] The "Johannes" was a Portuguese gold coin of the value of eight dollars in our present currency.

[3] Stuart's *Trumbull*, p. 519.

specie for the Connecticut troops. Col. Chapion was assigned twenty-four pounds of Connecticut currency for the purchase of cattle. Mr. Ralph Pomeroy was made deputy Quartermaster General for the State, and it was resolved that all supplies procurable should be at once forwarded to the cantonments of the Army on the Hudson. Acting on the advice of his Council the Governor issued his proclamation for a special session of the General Assembly.

Following on the heels of Gen. Knox came Humphreys. If Knox was sent to arrange for money, Humphreys, as appears from the following report to Washington, was sent on the equally important mission of ascertaining how to obtain men. His report is full of wise suggestions and shows how keen an observer he was and the minute attention he paid to details.

HARTFORD, February 21st, 1781.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I received at Lebanon your favour of the 15th and shall yield implicit obedience to the contents, but having been obliged to produce a Horse near N. Haven in the room of one of mine which I had lamed, I shall be under the necessity of sending thither & my return will be delayed a week or ten days; unless I should be honoured with your further Commands which will find me at this place. I enclose a Hartford Paper, containing some favourable advices from the West Indies. I have spoken to the Qr. Mas^{r} & Printer to have this Paper regularly paid for, & forwarded to Head Quarters. The Assembly meets here this day on the Subject of furnishing money and supplies for the Army. Should anything of moment occur I shall inform you of it. I have taken particular pains to ascertain the proportion of Recruits, in the several Towns thro' which I have passed, and believe more than half of the whole number are already obtained principally for three years, tho' there are some in every Town for the War. Most

of the Recruits are said to be exceedingly good men, but some who from age or other circumstances are not fit for the service have been mustered & turned over to the Recruiting Officers. By the law of the State the Recruiting Officer is compelled to receive them, after they are mustered by the Colonel of the Reg. of Militia to which they belonged and I see no way to get free of these men, but by a careful inspection on their joining the Army. In consequence of which and a proper representation, it is possible we may have the deficiency made good—at least we shall not be encumbered with the dead weight nor our provisions consumed with useless Mouths. Would it not be expedient to have an order issued cautioning circumspection in receiving Recruits, and pointing out the mode of rejecting those who are not capable of the service, by having duplicate Certificates made out, specifying the reasons of rejection, signed by the Inspector, and countersigned by the Commanding Officer of the Brigade—the one to be transmitted to the Select Men of the Town where such Recruits belonged to show that he is not in service, & cannot be considered or provided for as part of the quota of Town—the other to be forwarded to the Governor, together with a Return of all the men accepted as Recruits, with the Towns & Classes by which they were furnished, and a requisition to have them replaced by effective able-bodied Men.—Brigadier Gen. Huntington had given Orders to the Recruiting Officers in the Eastern part of this State, to have the men collected & forwarded immediately under Officers returning from furlough to Camp. This will not only save expense, but prevent many excesses & frequent Desertions which will take place, if the Recruits continue long in the State. Might it not be advisable to extend this regulation universally to the N. England States. The Dep. Qr. Master for the State, with the aid he has received from the Government would, be able, I believe to forward on considerable quantities of salted provisions to the North River, if the Quarter Master General would make the necessary arrangements with him. Would this not be an eligible measure in every point of consideration, and the more so, as there is great danger the supply of Beef Cattle, from this time to grass,

will be very irregular & precarious—And indeed I can foresee no means of obtaining any, but by assessment, as the Public has neither money or credit.—A little attention paid to this matter in season by that Department, may save an infinity of trouble & embarrassment, and cannot be attended with any disagreeable consequences.

I have the honor to be

With the most perfect respect &

Attachment, Your Excellency's faithful Aide & Humble Servant,

D. Humphreys.

His Excellency,
Gen. Washington.[1]

Another note, to Wadsworth, summarizes the situation:

Head Quarters New Windsor
March 29th, 1781

Dear Wadsworth

I write you, by the chain of Expresses, as there is an opportunity—just to inform you, that we have not a single word of News—The last account from the Marquis is of the 15th Inst. dated at York in Virginia, neither fleet has made an appearance—the detachment of light Infantry was at Annapolis, prevented going down the Bay, by a British Frigate. The Baron Steuben has assembled a large body of Militia & invested Arnold by Land. It is a period of the most anxious expectation—We are astonished at not hearing from the Southward since the 15th because if either Fleet had arrived by the 20th, we might have received the intelligence before this time.

The General is mounting his horse and I must finish to ride with him. Col. Harrison is appointed Chief Justice of the State of Maryland, and has taken his final leave of our family,

[1] United States Archives, Washington MSS., State Department, Washington.

leaving an injunction with me, to present his affectionate regards to you. Col. Tilghman joins me in Complts to yourself and the good family.

I am Sincerely Yours,
D. Humphreys.

P. S. If we have any good news, you shall have it by the first conveyance.

Following Humphreys' representations the Connecticut Assembly promptly and willingly voted to levy a tax of two pence half penny in the pound upon the Grand List of the State to be collected in gold and silver. These measures gave comparative comfort to the Connecticut officers and men, some of whom were preparing to accompany the Marquis de La Fayette, who was about to march to Virginia in aid of Baron Steuben and the local militia with a select corps of twelve hundred men, and the specific purpose of destroying the British army under Gen. Arnold and capturing the traitor. While the young French General was showing himself an apt pupil of Washington in military science, dispatches were received from the French Admiral and Rochambeau at Newport concerning the plan for co-operation of the French fleet with the land forces of the Virginia army. To perfect the details of the future operations against Arnold and Cornwallis, Washington went to Newport early in March. He was accompanied by his aides and Major-General Robert Howe. Great apprehension was felt at this time for his personal safety. La Fayette, through his secret channels of information, had learned that a band of three hundred horsemen had set out to traverse Long Island, and that boats had been sent up the Sound. It was thought that the object of the expedition was to cross over into Connecticut near New London and seize Gen. Washington on his journey as his escort was small. It was

suggested by La Fayette that the Duc de Lauzun with his cavalry should protect the General. Washington was not only safely guarded by the gaily uniformed French hussars but also by several battalions of Connecticut militia through the State.

While there was not the same military display as when Washington came to Hartford in the previous September, there was as much cordial greeting and reverent respect. In Hartford on March 4th, he met Gov. Trumbull and proceeded on his journey after a long interview with that distinguished man. His arrival in Newport was the signal for salutes and illuminations and many marks of the affection borne to him by the people. His visit was prolonged for nearly two weeks in which all the possibilities of the Virginia campaign were discussed and details settled. He had the satisfaction of seeing the French fleet sail out of the harbour on March 8th, under M. Destouchers, for the Chesapeake. He followed its progress with both interest and anxiety. The very nearly equal strength of the French and British fleets made the issue of a battle between them doubtful. "The attempt, however," says Washington, "made by our allies to dislodge the enemy in Virginia is a bold one and should it fail, will nevertheless entitle them to the thanks of the public."[1]

Washington left Newport before the result of the encounter could be known. He was in Hartford on Friday, March 17th, where he rested until Sunday morning when he resumed his journey, reaching New Windsor on Monday. The Commander-in-Chief did not contemplate any new enterprise until the success or failure of the demonstration in Virginia should be known. It was a bitter disappointment that the battle between the fleets off Chesapeake Bay on March 16th should have resulted in the partial

[1] Quoted, Irving's *Washington*, iv., p. 284.

crippling of the French fleet and the consequent entrance into Chesapeake Bay of the English ships. The action was brilliant and well fought. Each side claimed the victory. This made necessary a change of plans, as with the fleet in the bay the union between Arnold and Gen. Phillips with two thousand troops was certain and the united strength would be too great for La Fayette to think of making an attack. It was then thought best that La Fayette should proceed farther South, and join Gen. Greene. This decision was kept private when first made. Col. Humphreys in this letter to his friend, Col. Wadsworth, thus mentions this determination:

HEAD-QUARTERS,
NEW WINDSOR,
April 9th, 1781.

DEAR WADSWORTH:

Captain Dexter who will put this into your hands will be able to tell you the little news of the Army. We have no intelligence worth communicating on paper.

I have only to tell you in confidence, for it is not yet known in the Army that the Marquis de La Fayette is ordered with the Detachment under his Command to re-inforce the Southern Army under Major Gen. Greene. This was not intended at the time the Detachment marched from Camp as it was a body of troops, hastily made up and indifferently equipped for so remote a service. But the exigencies of the times required it and smaller inconvenience must always give way to greater. These Troops (who are very fine men) together with a Corps of Pennsylvania which have marched, will I hope, give a decided superiority to our Army in that quarter. The Recruits come in very slowly from the Eastern States. A strange lethargy seems to have seized all ranks and orders of Men, unless great exertions are made our Regts. will be very weak this Campaign. And as to supplies I fear our prospects are not very flattering. I pray you to forward the enclosed by

a safe hand to Mr. Hubbard:—it contains money for the purpose of a Hat, etc.—I have also put him in mind that there is not an officer from the state of Connecticut, but has received ten times the value of supplies that I have.—If the agents for the State should still be unable or unwilling to furnish me with a number of articles which I shall have occasion for at the opening of the Campaign; I shall be under the necessity of putting your friendship to a new trial by giving you another Commission to execute.

I am yours,
D. Humphreys

Col. Wadsworth.

P. S. If Mr. Hubbard should send you any articles for me will you forward them by the chain of expresses or some other conveyance.

The depressing effect of this failure of the Virginia expedition was somewhat alleviated by the cheering news from Gen. Greene, who with the aid of several partisan corps, notably that of Gen. Daniel Morgan, had driven Lord Cornwallis out of North Carolina.

Gen. Arnold and Gen. Phillips still ravaged Virginia although "the boy," as Lord Cornwallis called La Fayette, and Baron Steuben often came to the rescue of the distressed inhabitants. Urgent appeals were sent by Governor Jefferson, Richard Henry Lee and others for Washington to bring the main body of the Continental army to the defence of his native State. He had already sent forward all the troops that he thought could be spared from the defence of the Hudson, the last detachment being the Pennsylvania Line under Gen. Wayne. As had been agreed with the French, the long contemplated attack upon New York was possible when the French fleet then at Newport was reinforced by the larger fleet cruising in the West Indies and the success of the mission of Col. Laurens was fully known.

While there was still anxiety for the South there was a rumour of threatened danger from the North by way of Canada. Washington was still calm and unruffled. His plans had been well-considered. He thought that the capture of New York would be such a disaster as would compel the British to cease from aggressive warfare. The accomplishment of this design was the chief object of all his disposition of the Continental troops. He could safely leave the rescue of the South to his lieutenants there who knew and followed his methods of warfare.

Early in May a French frigate brought to Boston the new commander of the French fleet in American waters, Comte de Barras. He brought important dispatches from the French Court and the cheering intelligence that a large fleet under the Comte de Grasse would soon sail for the West Indies, of which twelve vessels would be available for co-operation with the American land forces.

It was evident that another interview with the French commanders was essential to perfect the plan for the summer campaign. It was agreed that the meeting should take place in Wethersfield, four miles below Hartford on the Connecticut River. Accompanied by Gen. Knox, Gen. du Portail of the Engineers, and probably his aides Gen. Washington left New Windsor on May 18th. He dined with Col. Vandenburg in Poughquag in the town of Beekman, and toward evening reached Morgan's tavern, forty-three miles from Fishkill Landing. He was on his way early in the morning, and took breakfast at Litchfield, dinner at Farmington, and toward night arrived at Wethersfield. He was entertained by Mr. Joseph Webb, one of the prominent men of the town. During his progress across the State he received the most enthusiastic greetings as at other times. The State provided liberally for the entertainment of Washington and his party, also for the French officers while in the State.

The conference was held in the house of Mr. Webb. It took a catechetical form, questions being propounded by Rochambeau, and answered by Washington. The probabilities were fully discussed, and the expediency of an attack upon New York or turning southward was then determined. Both Washington and Rochambeau were agreed that the two armies should now be united, and at least an attempt be made to capture the British outposts in West Chester and in the upper part of Manhattan Island. The obstacles to a southern campaign were many, a chief one being the blockade of the French fleet in Newport harbour. The troops would have to march by land, which was fatiguing, expensive and dangerous to health during the summer heat. It was finally concluded that a new encampment of both armies should be made on the Hudson nearer New York City.

A circular letter to the Governors of the New England States "to complete their battalions, and provide means of transportation and full and prompt supplies" was then issued by Washington. He asked further from Connecticut and Massachusetts "for a fresh loan of powder." He left Wethersfield on May 24th and arrived at New Windsor at sunset on May 25th. He immediately gave the necessary orders for breaking up the encampment. The site chosen for the summer camp was near Dobbs Ferry. The lines of the American army extended from the Hudson eastward to the Neparan or Sawmill River. Beyond it "on the hills further East reaching to the Bronx" were the French. Washington Irving, who knew the region perfectly, says:

> The beautiful valley of the Neparan intervened between the encampments. It was a lovely country for a Summer encampment, breezy hills commanding wide prospects, umbrageous valleys watered by bright pastoral streams, the Bronx, the

Spraine and the Neparan, and abounding with never failing springs. The French encampment made a gallant display along the Greenburgh Hills.[1]

It was now July and no opportunity had occurred for any effective action. A plan for the surprise of the outposts had been devised, and put into execution on the first and second days of the month, but a reconnaissance had showed that the northern part of the island had been reinforced and a ship of war stationed in the river.

After this discovery Gen. Lincoln with eight hundred troops landed above Spuyten Duyvil Creek and occupied the high ground in front of King's Bridge. Washington with the main army came from Peekskill on the second and reached Valentine's hill at sunrise the following day. The discovery of Gen. Lincoln and his troops by a foraging party led to a skirmish in which a few were killed and wounded. The legion of Comte de Lauzun, which reached East Chester on its march from Connecticut, hastened to his aid on hearing the firing, as did Washington. The British perceiving the superior force retired to their boats and crossed over the Harlem to Manhattan. Later in the summer a careful reconnaissance was made by Washington and Comte Rochambeau accompanied by several engineers from the French army. They took with them their staffs and spent two days in viewing the enemy's works from every possible position. Five thousand troops under the Marquis de Chastellux and Gen. Lincoln protected them while engaged in this perilous duty, and broke up effectually the refugee works in that part of West Chester, and cleared it of marauders. Sir Henry Clinton was alarmed and sent word to Lord Cornwallis to send him three regiments from Carolina and such other troops as he could spare from his own force.

[1] Irving's *Washington*, iv., p. 304.

After this successful enterprise the armies resumed the daily routine of military life. Local tradition tells of the gallantry of the French officers and men; of the informal dances to which the fair maidens of the neighbourhood proudly came; of impromptu banquets where the paucity of delicacies was more than compensated by the courteous grace and witty sayings of the cultivated men who thus welcomed and relieved from care for a few hours the Commander-in-Chief for whom they had an affectionate reverence. The summer heat was tempered by breezes from the hills, and the monotony of camp life was often broken by merry songs and stories. Washington was daily expecting to learn that the Comte de Grasse had left the West Indies for the American coast. It was then his intention to move the united army down to New York, effect a junction with the French fleet augmented by the West India squadron, dispose the troops brought by it to the best advantage, and with this large force by land and sea make an assault upon the city that could not be resisted.

Should circumstances not allow this, he had a clear outline in his mind of a campaign in Virginia: To push southward with the combined American and French forces under his command, unite them with those already assailing Lord Cornwallis, and either compel him to retreat to New York or surrender, relying on the co-operation of the French fleet. While he was thus awaiting the proper hour to strike an effective blow, the Congress sitting at Philadelphia in a feebly forcible manner attempted to grapple with the problems of financial stringency and the maintenance of the army. A curtailment of expenses, a reduction of the army, and the completion of the war by some brilliant and decisive stroke, were the expedients proposed to him by a special commission which visited him at his headquarters at the Vanbrugh

Livingston house near Dobbs Ferry in August. These two commissioners were the recently appointed superintendents of finance, often called in the documents of the period, the financier, or financier General, Mr. Robert Morris, a wealthy Philadelphia merchant who gave to the sustaining of the credit of the Congress thought, time, money, and his own credit[1]; and the other was Judge Richard Peters, then Secretary of the Board of War.

It is related by several writers that while they were still consulting with Washington the messenger from Comte de Barras arrived with the dispatches announcing that Comte de Grasse with his fleet had already sailed for the Chesapeake and not for New York as had been planned. Immediate action was necessary as the Comte would not promise to remain upon the coast later than the middle of October. The campaign in Virginia must be sustained and the army at once transported to the vicinity of La Fayette. Turning to Judge Peters, Washington said: "What can you do for me?" "With money everything; without it nothing," was his brief reply, at the same time turning an anxious look toward Morris. "Let me know the sum you desire," said the patriotic financier, comprehending the expression of his eye.[2]

An estimate was quickly made by Washington, and twenty thousand dollars in "hard money" borrowed from the Comte de Rochambeau to enable the Commander-in-Chief to present a small gift to the men who had long been without pay, and many of whom, dreading the Southern climate, were not willing to continue with the army. Active preparations were now made for the march

[1] An excellent sketch of Robert Morris, written from a modern point of view, is found in "The Makers of America" series, published by Dodd, Mead & Co. in 1892. The author is the well-known economist, Professor William Sumner, of Yale University.

[2] Benson J. Lossing's *Field Book of the Revolution*, ii., p. 509, note.

but without any public announcement of the destination of the army. This was a matter of absolute necessity as information of events in the American camp was almost simultaneously given to Sir Henry Clinton. An extensive plot of ground in New Jersey was chosen for a camp and ostentatiously measured; ovens were built. Sir Henry was entirely unaware that the army was to do more than slightly alter its position so as to be nearer to the British encampment on Staten Island. Pioneers were sent to see that the roads to King's Bridge were free from any obstruction, and on August 19th, the whole army was paraded in that direction, and faced about for the King's Ferry. With his personal staff Washington crossed the Hudson on the evening of August 20th. Temporary headquarters were made at the house of Col. Hay, better known as the White House. A portion of the troops had crossed earlier in the day. The French marched to the Ferry by way of White Plains, North Castle, Pine's Bridge and Compond. With their commander they crossed on the second. While superintending the passage of the various bodies of troops, stores, ammunition and baggage which occupied several days, Washington entertained Comte Rochambeau and with him visited West Point. From the White House he sent dispatches to La Fayette announcing his purpose of joining him and to the Comte de Grasse requesting him to send transports to the Head of Elk in Maryland to convey his troops to Virginia. He desired the transports to be there not later than September 8th. One of the last detachments to cross was that of Gen. Lincoln. The original order to him in the handwriting of Col. Humphreys is still preserved:

HEAD QUARTERS, Aug. 24th, 1781.

SIR,

His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief directs me to inform you, it is his request that the whole of the Troops under

your command should be held in the most perfect readiness to march at four o'clock tomorrow morning.

For this purpose, he has ordered all the Men of the Detachment now employed at the Ferry to be relieved by the Troops under the Command of Major-General Heath; as soon as this is done, the General also desires, that you will give the most pointed directions to the Commanding officers of Corps *to see* that every man is present and everything prepared to move at the appointed time.

His Excellency has considered that the proceedings of the Court of Enquiry on John Lewis of Colonel Olney's Regt., approves of their opinion, desires you will publish whatever is necessary on the subject in your orders and direct Lewis to be liberated immediately.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your Most Obedt. Servant,

D. Humphreys, Aide-de-Camp.[1]

Major-Gen. Lincoln.

When the allied armies were marching through New Jersey the troops did not know the service for which they were intended. Dr. James Thatcher, whose *Military Journal* is an authority upon the incidents of camp life, says:

Our situation reminds us of some theatrical exhibition where the interest and expectation of the spectators are continually increasing, and where curiosity is wrought to the highest point. Our destination has been for some time a matter of perplexing doubt and uncertainty; bets have run high, on the one side that we were to occupy the ground marked out on the Jersey shore, to aid in the siege of New York; on the other, that we were stealing a march upon the enemy, and are actually destined to Virginia, in pursuit of the Army under Cornwallis.[2]

[1] From the Fogg Collection of Autographs, Boston, Mass. Other letters relating to this period will be found in the Appendix.

[2] Thatcher's *Military Journal*, p. 323.

It was not until the Delaware had been crossed and Sir Henry Clinton realized that he had been outgeneralled that the army was informed of the important duty it had to perform. The soldiers were aware of the gravity of the situation and with very little discontent prepared for the work before them. On September 2d, the allied forces passed through Philadelphia. The people of that city showed their enthusiasm by cheers, waving of handkerchiefs, displaying of flags, and welcoming salutes. The line of American troops with the artillery, commissary, and baggage wagons extended for two miles. In this long procession were a few soldiers' children and wives, and some camp followers. The worn uniforms and imperfect equipment of many of the soldiers showed the lack of any careful system of providing for the army. It was in sharp contrast with the neat and attractive white and green uniforms of the French troops and the brilliantly dazzling costumes and decorations of the French officers. While at Philadelphia, Washington and Rochambeau were the guests of Mr. Morris. For the officers of the army after a grand review of the French regiments, the French Minister, the Chevalier de Luzern, gave a banquet, to which were invited the President and members of the Congress and the chief people of the city. It was during this banquet that an express arrived with dispatches announcing that de Grasse had arrived in the Chesapeake, and that three thousand troops under the Marquis de St. Simon had already landed. This cheering news was loudly applauded, and the luxuries provided were more fully enjoyed by the guests. It was about this time that the arrival of Col. Laurens at Boston on August 25th, with two millions and a half livres in cash of the six millions promised by King Louis XVI. was known. This smoothed greatly the path of the commanding general and "the Financier." The entry of Washington into the city is

only briefly noted in the contemporary newspapers. It is thus chronicled in *The Pennsylvania Gazette:*

PHILADELPHIA, September 5.

On Thursday last arrived in this city their excellencies, General Washington and Count Rochambeau with their respective suites. They were met and accompanied to town by his excellency, the President of the State, the Financier General, and many other gentlemen of distinction together with the Philadelphia troop of horse. Every class of citizens seemed to vie with each other in showing marks of respect to this illustrious pair of Defenders of the rights of mankind.[1]

Gen. Washington soon followed his army to the head of Elk, which he reached on September 6. The greater portion of the troops and military stores had arrived and the embarkation began. A letter to the French Admiral was written there by Washington; after congratulations upon his safe arrival, mentioning the embarkation and asking his co-operation in blocking up the York River, he says:

As it will be of the greatest importance to prevent the escape of his lordship from his present position I am pursuaded that every measure which prudence can dictate will be adopted for that purpose until the arrival of our complete force, when I hope his lordship will be compelled to yield his ground to the superior power of our combined forces.[2]

With his suite Washington and Rochambeau proceeded to Baltimore where they were received on September 8 with cordial formality and an address presented to the

[1] *The Pennsylvania Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, Number 2673. Wednesday, September 5, 1781.

[2] Gen. Washington to Comte de Grasse, as quoted in Irving's *Washington*, iv., p. 347.

Commander-in-Chief to which he gave a brief response. In his honour the city was illuminated in the evening and he received many of its citizens. Accompanied by Col. Humphreys only, for whom his friendship was ripening into affection, Washington left Baltimore early on the morning of September 9th, as he wished to reach his home that evening. For six years he had given himself to the service of his country, and not once returned to his beloved Mount Vernon. The discomforts of the camp, the burden of responsibility, the planning of campaigns, the serious disappointment of his cherished hopes had been his lot. He had never complained or shrunk from the duty laid upon him. The Virginia country gentleman, the obscure colonel, was now the defender of liberty, and had proved himself worthy to rank with the great commanders of the world.

Little time did he have for quiet contemplation of the joys of domestic happiness alone with his family. The other members of his suite arrived on the following day, as did also Comte de Rochambeau and Marquis de Chastellux with their suites. Gen. Washington and Lady Washington had the delight of entertaining them at Mount Vernon with that courtesy and bounteous hospitality for which Mount Vernon was famed. Upon the green banks sloping down to the Potomac, under the avenues of trees, or wandering over the extensive fields of the large domain, the war-worn warriors enjoyed a brief season of idyllic repose before engaging in a deadly struggle for securing the freedom of the United States. Upon the fourteenth of September, Washington arrived at Williamsburg, where he learned of the naval battle of the fifth between the French and English fleets, in which several vessels were severely damaged. Comte de Grasse immediately put to sea with twenty-four ships, intending to protect from molestation the squadron under Comte de Barras, which

had on August 25, sailed from Newport convoying a fleet of transports with troops under M. Choisy, artillery and military stores. On September 18 there was a conference between Washington and Comte de Grasse on his flagship, the *Ville de Paris*. The visit was one of ceremony as well as conference, and Washington was attended by his suite together with Gen. Knox and Gen. du Portail. De Rochambeau with his suite was also present. The plan of co-operation was then fully detailed and nearly every point of it mentioned by Washington assented to by the French Admiral. After this important negotiation dinner was served with the dainty elegance of the old régime as far as the confined space of a ship's cabin would permit.

The return to Williamsburg in a small craft in which they had gone to Lynn Haven was slow on account of storms and contrary winds. In the meantime news that the squadron of six vessels under Admiral Digby to reinforce the fleet of Admiral Graves had entered New York harbour reached the French Admiral and made him very cautious. He then proposed to sail in pursuit of the English fleet, leaving two vessels at the mouth of York River and a few frigates in the James. This would evidently enable Cornwallis to escape, as the naval force would be inferior to that which the British could station in the bay. It required much meditation, tact, and all Washington's patience and perseverance to change this purpose of Comte de Grasse. Finally a letter from Washington, of which La Fayette was the bearer, the entreaties and arguments of which he was to second by mouth, prevailed. From this time the investment of Yorktown began. A battery was erected by the allied armies on Point Comfort, for the protection of the fleet. Several vessels were now detailed to pass up and down the James. Toward the end of September the allied armies were encamped near Williamsburg, and active operations com-

menced. The situation of Yorktown on a peninsula near the mouths of the James and York rivers made it important. Whoever held it controlled the navigation of those rivers by which the richer portions of Virginia were reached. The town had been skilfully fortified by Cornwallis with seven redoubts and six batteries upon the landward side. They were connected by entrenchments. A line of batteries stretched along the river. The ravines and the creeks which emptied into the York River were utilized for outworks with several redoubts strengthened by abattis. Gloucester Point on the north side of the York had been also fortified and placed under the command of Lieut.-Col. Dundas. The British army was then encamped "about Yorktown within range of the outer redoubt and field works." "Washington and his staff," says Irving, "bivouacked that night on the ground in the open air. He slept under a mulberry tree, the root serving for his pillow."[1]

The allied armies faced each other the next morning on each side of Beaver Dam Creek, the Americans taking the east and the French the west side of the creek. On that very night Cornwallis withdrew his men within the inner works, leaving the outer works to be occupied by the investing army which it was not slow to do. Detachments of American light infantry and a body of French troops were sent to seize them early on the morning of September 27, and thus cover the troops throwing up breastworks. A brave and gallant officer, who had been temporarily with Washington's military family, and was then Colonel of the First New Hampshire Regiment which formed part of Gen. Hamilton's brigade, Alexander Scammel, a native of Meriden (now Milford, Massachusetts), was in pursuance of his duty reconnoitring the ground. He was surprised near the Fusileers redoubt,

[1] Irving's *Washington*, iv., pp. 356, 357.

situated near the river bank at the mouth of a little stream, by two or three Hessians. He endeavoured to escape but finally surrendered, when he was cruelly shot and left for dead. He was carried into Yorktown by some English soldiers and tenderly cared for. Washington, who had a high regard for him, requested of Lord Cornwallis that he might be removed to Williamsburg, which was politely and cheerfully granted. He died mourned by the whole army, on October 6.

His friend Col. Humphreys composed this epitaph:

AN

EPITAPH

ALEXANDER SCAMMEL

Adjutant-General of the American Armies,
and
Colonel of the first regiment of New Hampshire,
while
he commanded
a chosen corps of light infantry,
at the
successful siege of York-Town, in Virginia,
was,
in the gallant performance of his duty,
as field officer of the day,
unfortunately captured and
afterward insidiously wounded;
of which wound he expired at Williamsburg, October 1781.
Anno aetatis . . .

Though no kind angel glanc'd aside the ball,
Nor fed'ral arms pour'd vengeance for his fall:
Brave Scammel's fame, to distant regions known,
Shall last beyond this monumental stone,
Which conqu'ring armies (from their toils return'd)
Rear'd to his glory, while his fate they mourn'd.

In his address to the armies our poet refers to his death in these vigorous lines:

> Nor less, brave Scammel, frown'd thine angry fate,
> (May deathless shame that British deed await!)
> On York's fam'd field, amid the first alarms,
> Ere yet fair vict'ry crown'd the allied arms,
> Fell chance betray'd thee to the hostile band,
> The hapless victim of th' assassin hand:
> Lo! while I tell the execrable deed,
> Fresh in his side the dark wound seems to bleed;
> That small red current still for vengeance cries,
> And asks, "Why sleeps the thunder in the skies?"
> On him, ye heav'ns, let all your vengeance fall,
> On the curst wretch who wing'd th' insidious ball
> But thou, blest shade, be sooth'd! be this thy praise,
> Ripe were thy virtues, though too few thy days!
> Be this thy fame, through life of all approv'd,
> To die lamented, honour'd, and belov'd.

The main body of the allied armies commenced the march from Williamsburg, twelve miles distant, on September 28, and by October 1, were encamped in a semi-circle about two miles from the British works "each end resting on the river, so that the investment by land was complete."[1]

The fleet of Comte de Grasse effectually secured the entrance to the rivers, so that the British General and his troops were completely shut in. Redoubts were at once made by the Americans during the night. When discovered in the morning they were fired upon, three being killed and several wounded. An expedition sally, made by the garrison at Gloucester Point for forage in which it was supported by Col. Tarleton's legion, which went across the river for that purpose, resulted in a skirmish

[1] Irving's *Washington*, iv., p. 359.

with the hussars of the Duke de Lauzun, who was with Gen. Weedon's militia watching that port; in which each side fought gallantly, but neither gained a positive advantage, and retreated with a British loss of one officer and eleven men, and a French loss of two officers and fourteen hussars.

During the night of October 6 the first parallel was commenced at six hundred yards from the British works. It was completed on the ninth with several batteries and redoubts. The men who were engaged in making it were subject to a continuous fire from the enemy, but there was only a slight loss as much of the work was done by night. When it was finished a heavy fire was immediately commenced upon the enemy's works with excellent effect. "Many of their guns," says Judge Marshall, "were dismounted and silenced, and their works were in different places demolished. The next day new batteries were opened and the fire became so heavy that the besieged withdrew their cannon from their embrasures and scarcely returned a shot."[1]

With that calmness which he always displayed in the midst of stirring events Washington directed the details of the siege. He watched carefully every movement, was frequently in the trenches and batteries, examining the redoubts, and then gave his orders for any alterations that seemed expedient. He showed here as in Boston his perfect knowledge of the proper method of conducting a siege. A generous rivalry between the French and Americans as to the completion of their part in the investing works sprang up. Both armies looked up to their commander with mingled respect and affection.

A second parallel within three hundred yards of the works was commenced by Baron Steuben's division on October 11, and when daylight disclosed the work to the

[1] Marshall's *Washington*, iv., pp. 483, 484.

enemy the men subject to a most distressing discharge from the guns of the two redoubts, advanced three hundred yards from the main works and on a line with the parallel at either end. It was seen that those redoubts must be taken by assault. The night of the fourteenth was chosen for the attempt.

The redoubt nearest the river was to be stormed by American troops under command of La Fayette, and the other by French troops under Baron de Viomenil. In the detachment for the river redoubt was Col. Hamilton who led the van and with such eagerness that he did not stop to allow the sappers to remove the abattis but "scrambled over like rough bush fighters." Hamilton was the first in the works, a soldier who knelt on one knee giving him the support of his shoulder upon which to rest his foot while he surmounted the parapet. The assault was successfully made, and the redoubt was carried at the point of the bayonet. It was manned principally by Hessians, and there was a desire by some to avenge the death of Col. Scammel upon some of the officers. The spirit of bravery that animated the stormers is seen in the messages that passed through Col. Benby, La Fayette's aide, from that officer to Baron de Viomenil: "He was in his redoubt, where was the Baron?" "Tell the Marquis," was the reply, "that I am not in mine but will be in it in five minutes."

Washington from the grand battery watched the assault in company with his staff and Gen. Lincoln and Gen. Knox and their staffs. When the assault was complete he turned to Gen. Knox and said, "It is done, and well done," and to his favourite servant, "William, bring me my horse."

So completely shattered were the works and many of the houses in Yorktown that Cornwallis saw further resistance was useless.

He hoped to save the disgrace of a surrender and formed a plan of escape by way of Gloucester, attacking Gen. Choisy's camp, mounting his infantry on the horses he expected to capture, then riding rapidly for the upper country until he reached the fords of the great rivers and then turning northward fight his way to New York. The dispersal by a wild storm of the boats he had collected for crossing the York, after one detachment had been safely landed, put an end to this adventurous scheme. On October 17, the same day that Burgoyne had surrendered four years before, Cornwallis proposed, after the batteries of the second parallel had poured a destructive fire into the town, a cessation of hostilities for twenty-four hours and a meeting of commissioners at the house of Mrs. Moore in the rear of the first parallel; to which Washington consented. The American commissioners were Viscomte de Noailles and Col. Laurens and the British Col. Dundas and Col. Ross. They met on the 18th but were unable to come to a perfect understanding. Finally Washington prepared a rough draft of the terms he would accept, which were similar to those granted by Cornwallis to Gen. Lincoln at the surrender of Charleston the year before. A fair copy was made of them and after some remonstrance at their harshness by Col. Ross they were agreed to by the British commissioners and signed by Cornwallis, Capt. Symonds, British commander on the York River, Washington, Rochambeau, de Barras, and de Grasse.[1]

[1] A facsimile from the original then (1852) in the collection of Peter Force of Washington, D. C., is given of the xiv. articles with the signatures of Cornwallis and Capt. Symonds on p. 923 of Lossing's *Field Book of the American Revolution*, ii.

CHAPTER XII

The Surrender of Cornwallis

Formal Surrender of British Army—Site of the Surrender—Washington's General Orders—Surrender Announced to Congress—Its Action—Signal Honour Conferred on Humphreys to Convey Captured Standards and Official Report of Surrender to Congress—Humphreys, Allusions to it in his Poems—Resolutions of Congress—Humphreys Returns to Washington—Washington's Plans for Further Campaigns—Troops Sent back to the Hudson—Washington's Visit to Philadelphia—Humphreys Sent to the Hudson—His Report to Washington—Selects Headquarters for Washington at Newburgh—Washington's Reply—The Suspension of Hostilities—Humphreys Visits his Native State—Is Entrusted by Yale with the Diploma for Washington's Doctorate—Leaves for Philadelphia—Accompanies Washington to Newburgh—The Life at Newburgh—Venality of Army Contractors—Letter to Humphreys—Arrival of Sir Guy Carleton at New York—Peace Negotiations Resumed—Skirmishing in the South—Hanging of Capt. Huddy—Reprisal by Gen. Washington—Appointment of Peace Commissioners—Preliminary Treaty of Peace Signed—Act of Parliament Passed Consenting to Independence of the Colonies.

THE formal surrender of the British army was soon arranged for. As the news of the defeat of the British spread, crowds came in from the neighbouring country to witness the humiliation of the "sarpints" as they were called. Naturally it was a great day for the Virginians for not only had the enemy been defeated on their soil but the defeat had been brought about by their own chieftain, George Washington. The actual cere-

mony of the surrender was brief and simple. According to tradition it took place in a field "not more than half a mile southward of the British intrenchments," but tradition errs sometimes, and does certainly in this case, as the well known picture by Trumbull, who in 1791 visited Yorktown, shows the house of Governor Nelson, which is not visible from the traditional site on the east side of Hampton road. The site painted by Trumbull is "a large field on the west side of Hampton road, sloping in the direction of the Pigeon Quarter, and about a mile from the British lines" (the distance mentioned in history), from which that house can be seen.[1]

At twelve o'clock on October 19, the allied armies were drawn up in two lines which extended nearly a mile, the Americans on the right and the French on the left of the road.

Washington, nobly mounted, with his staff, was in front of the Continentals, and near him were some of his favourite officers. The French troops came upon the field with colours flying and a band playing merrily. They were commanded by Rochambeau and grouped around him were several other distinguished Frenchmen, La Fayette, Chastellux, Choisy, Lauzun, and others. In both armies the national standards and regimental colours were liberally displayed.

About two o'clock the British garrison left their battered works and marched to the place appointed for the capitulation. They presented an almost festive appearance in new uniforms and with well polished arms. They approached with colours cased and the drums playing that lugubrious tune, "The world's turned upside down."

Earl Cornwallis did not appear, as the mortification of the surrender had made him ill. When the troops approached the American lines all saluted and Gen.

[1] Lossing's *Field Book of the Revolution*, ii., p. 530.

PLAN
of
the SIEGE of
YORK TOWN
in
VIRGINIA.
Engraved for Stedmans History of the American War.
YORK RIVER
GLOUCESTER
YORK TOWN
Second Parallel
First Parallel
British
French
American
REFERENCES.
A. Redoubt taken by assault on the night of the 14th Oct. by the Americans.
B. Redoubt taken by assault on the night of the 15th Oct. by the French.
SCALE of FEET.

O'Hara riding up to Gen. Washington tendered the apologies of the commander and offered the Earl's sword to him. The General indicated Gen. Lincoln who was near him as the one to receive it. Gen. Lincoln also indicated the proper place in the field to stack arms. It is said by Dr. Thatcher that in passing through the lines formed by the allied army the march of the British troops was careless and irregular and their aspect sullen. The order to "ground arms was given by their platoon officer, and with a tone of deep chagrin, and many of the soldiers threw down their muskets with a violence sufficient to break them."[1]

It had been arranged by Col. Hamilton, the officer of the day, that the British and German regimental standards should be received by twenty-eight American sergeants who were drawn up in line for that purpose, under the command of Ensign Robert Wilson of Gen. Clinton's brigade, the youngest commissioned officer in the army, he then being only eighteen years old. When the order was given to the twenty-eight captains carrying the cased colours to advance two paces to give, and the sergeants to advance two paces to receive the standards, there was hesitation. Hamilton riding up enquired the reason and found they were unwilling to surrender their colours to non-commissioned officers. He was willing to spare their feelings and ordered Ensign Wilson to receive the standards and give them to the sergeants. With this significant act, and the taking off of the accoutrements, the formalities of the surrender were over.

In his general orders the next day Washington congratulated the united army upon the result. He praises the patient bravery of the soldiers and mentions with commendation many of the officers. He announces that Divine Service would be held throughout the camp on the

[1] Dr. Thatcher's *Military Journal*, p. 346.

next day at which devout thanksgiving for the result would be offered. Soon after the surrender, Washington sent his senior aide, Col. Tilghman, with dispatches to Congress announcing the capitulation. He rode rapidly, and reached Philadelphia at midnight on Tuesday, October 23. He made his way upon a gallop to the house of the Hon. Thomas McLean, the President of Congress, who lived in High Street, near Second.

The watchman of the city thought him a suspicious character and was about to arrest him. One honest old German watchman to whom he explained the reason of his haste, called upon his beat the next hour in this fashion: "Drei o'clock, and Gornwallis is daken." Repeated by other watchmen the whole city was soon awakened by the joyful news, and salutes were fired, flags displayed, and the old liberty bell rung. On the following day the dispatches were read with exultation in Congress, and it was at once resolved to go at once in solemn procession that afternoon "to the Dutch church and return thanks to Almighty God for crowning the allied army of the United States and France with success by the surrender of the whole British army under the command of the Earl Cornwallis."[1]

So great was the joy of the Continental Congress at the surrender of Cornwallis that a special committee, Mr. Witherspoon, Mr. Varnum, and Mr. Sherman, reported on Friday, October 26, 1781, the draft of a proclamation recommending that December 13 be kept a day of thanksgiving throughout the United States for this glorious victory. The draft was unanimously adopted.[2]

[1] *Journals of Congress and of the United States in Congress assembled for the year 1781*, published by order of Congress, Volume vi., p. 208. Philadelphia, Printed by David C. Claypoole, MDCCXXXI. 12 mo., p. 522, *Journals of the American Congress from 1774 to 1788*, in four volumes, Vol. iii., from August 1, 1778, to March 31, 1782. Washington: Printed and published by Way and Gideon, 1823.

[2] *Journal*, 1781, pp. 210–212. Reprint pp. 680, 681.

On Monday, October 29, the committee upon the letter from Washington, Mr. Randolph, Mr. Boudinot, Mr. Varnum, and Mr. Carroll, reported a series of resolutions in which thanks were given to General Washington, Comte de Grasse, his Christian Majesty the King of France, Comte de Rochambeau, to the commanding officers and others of the Corps of Artillery.

It was also determined to erect upon the site of the surrender a marble column "to be ornamented with the emblems of the alliance between the United States and his most Christian majesty, and inscribed with a succinct narrative of the surrender of Earl Cornwallis."[1]

Col. Tilghman was to be presented by the Board of War "in the name of the United States in Congress assembled, a horse properly caparisoned and an elegant sword in testimony of their high opinion of his merit and ability."[2]

As Gen. Washington had in the past singled out David Humphreys for posts of danger or for missions requiring the greatest tact, so he now fittingly singled out that officer for the highest honour within his gift.

Humphreys had been entrusted with the difficult and perilous task of capturing the commander of the enemy, he had been sent on a mission of reconnaissance through the New England States, he had alone been selected to accompany Washington on that intimate journey of the Virginian gentleman to his dearly loved home at Mount Vernon and now he was chosen out of all the officers of the Continental army to represent that army and its great General officially before the Representatives of the newborn Nation.

Col. Tilghman had been sent as a messenger to convey the hurried news, but such an epoch-making victory had to be announced to Congress with a formality that befitted the august occasion. If Gen. Washington was deliberate

[1] *Journal*, 1781, p. 213.

[2] *Journal*, 1781, p. 215.

in war he was equally so in official matters. He took ten days in compiling his report, and when all was ready he sent for Col. David Humphreys and formally entrusted to him his official report to Congress, and delivered into his hands the standards of the British and German troops which were to be presented to Congress as the outward tokens of the victory of the allied forces.

As Humphreys bowed to receive these trophies at the hands of his General and friend he felt repaid for all that he had done for him and his country. In such supreme moments as these all past toil and danger are forgotten. To few indeed are given such signal moments of honourable exultation. Careless as succeeding generations have been of the memory of this great man, yet his contemporaries saw with a keener eye, and with a justice that was well deserved, no envy was felt by his brother officers at this remarkable honour, for all felt that into no better hands could the emblems of their victory have been confided than into those of him who was the "well belov'd of Washington."

Leaving the headquarters near Yorktown with a small escort and a few servants, Humphreys rode with great expedition to Philadelphia. He was hailed on his journey with acclamation, as all knew that he was the special messenger bearing trophies of success, and was received everywhere with special regard as the representative of the Commander-in-Chief and the victorious armies.

He reached Philadelphia on Saturday, November 3. He was "met on the commons by the City troop of horse, and by them paraded through two or three streets of the city, preceded by the colours of the United States and France to the State House, where he laid the standards at the feet of Congress to the great joy of a numerous concourse of spectators."[1]

[1] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 2682, Wednesday, November 7, 1781. *Ibid.* Also Sparks's *Washington*, viii., p .193.

In his letter to the President of Congress Washington said: "My present dispatches being important I have committed them to the care of Colonel Humphreys, one of my aide-de-camps, whom for his fidelity, and good services I beg leave to recommend to Congress and your Excellency."

The official return brought by Col. Humphreys is printed in full in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* from which we learn that the standards were those of the Forty-third, Seventy-sixth, and Eightieth British regiments, consisting of two sets each, and eighteen were those of the German regiments. These were all that were brought to Philadelphia, although four "British union flags and forty-one British and thirty-two German camp colours" were also delivered to Washington on the field of surrender. The scene in the old State House was memorable and deeply impressed all present.

It is a detail of the surrender which is omitted in the standard histories of the Revolution and the lives of Washington, although at the time it was hailed with applause and made the name of Col. Humphreys justly famous throughout the whole country.

The presentation of the standards was made the subject of a picture by a Spanish or Danish artist, which is said to have been painted while the Colonel was in Europe in 1784. The presentation was one of the proposed subjects of ten historical paintings by his friend Col. Trumbull as is ascertained from a paragraph in a letter by Col. Humphreys to his brother John written from Mount Vernon, August 4, 1786:

> There is an eminent painter in Philadelphia who is engaged in giving some historical paintings of the remarkable events during the war, and who has requested me to sit for him (on my return from the South), as he has occasion to introduce my

figure into two scenes he has now on hand, viz; the first the presentation of the standards taken at Yorktown to Congress by your humble servant, the other the resignation of General Washington.[1]

In this painting, known as "The Delivery of the Standards," Col. Humphreys is depicted with a furled British standard in hand standing near the entrance to the Hall of Congress. At his left is a mounted cannon, and in the background an orderly holding his horse, with the military escort grouped near by, and beyond are the houses and trees of the city of Philadelphia. It is a spirited picture in which the figure of the Colonel stands in bold relief. There are two traditions of the date when it was painted. Mr. Dunlap asserts that: "this memorable event, his presenting the standards, was painted by a Danish artist when the poet and soldier was in Europe between 1784 and 1786, as Secretary of Legation to Mr. Jefferson."[2]

Mr. Orcutt in the *History of Derby*, relying upon the information furnished to him by members of the family twenty-five years ago, says that "the picture was painted in Spain by a Spanish artist under the direction of Col. Humphreys."[3]

This painting was presented to Yale by the Colonel's widow, but we regret to have to chronicle that Yale University has proved an unfaithful trustee in this matter. The painting was for many years in the old Library, and then when the new Art Building was erected it claimed all the pictures scattered throughout the various buildings; that is as it should be, but unfortunately the persons in charge of the Art Building had curious canons of their own as to what constituted value. It was considered that

[1] Johnston's *Yale*, p. 155.
[2] Dunlap's *History of the American Theatre*, p. 89.
[3] *History of Derby*, p. 199.

Presentation to Congress by Col. David Humphreys of the Flags Surrendered at Yorktown

the painting was not of especial value from an artistic point of view and it was relegated to some obscure corner in the attic or cellar. When search was made for it in the summer of 1902, no trace of it could be found anywhere. When the visitor to the Art Gallery at Yale sees the many paintings of inferior merit, even from an art point of view, he wonders why about the only painting Yale ever possessed that was of permanent historical value should have been cast aside.

The value of a painting does not always consist in its artistic value, there is such a thing as historic value, there is such a thing as patriotism, and there is such a thing as moral value.

A painting representing one of the greatest historic events of this nation, and done in the lifetime of the principal personage in that event, has a value, or ought to have, far above that accorded to a painting representing an unknown personage or a landscape of no place or note. A painting which an institution accepts becomes a trust and should either be kept on view or else returned to the heirs of the person who created the trust.

Many old persons at New Haven, with whom Col. Humphreys is still a memory to conjure by, have expressed their regret and mortification that a painting so intimately associated with the history of the United States and depicting an incident so remarkable in the life of one of the most distinguished alumni of Yale should have disappeared in so questionable a manner.[1]

In his Poems, Col. Humphreys alludes to this distinguished event in his life. In his "Address to the Armies," he says:

[1] This painting has recently come into possession of the author through private sale, from a New York dealer in antiques, who refused to divulge how it came into his hands.

Or see on fair Virginia's strand arise
The column pointing to the fav'ring skies;
Inscribed with deeds the fed'rate arms have done,
And grav'd with trophies from Britannia won:
Here stand the conqu'ring bands; the vanquish'd throng
Through the long lines in silence move along:
The stars and lillies, here in laurels drest,
And there, dark shrouds the banner'd pride invest;
These twice twelve banners once in pomp unfurl'd,
Spread death and terror round the southern world:
In various colours from the staff unroll'd,
The lion frown'd, the eagle flam'd in gold;
Hibernia's harp, reluctant, here was hung,
And Scotia's thistle there spontaneous sprung:
These twice twelve flags no more shall be display'd,
Save in the dome where warlike spoils are laid:
Since, where the fathers in high council meet,
This hand has placed them prostrate at their feet.[1]

In that on "The Death of General Washington," he says:

What eagle flight can trace through regions far,
Th' immortal march of Washington in war?
Who sing his conq'ring arms o'er York that shone,
And deeds surviving monumental stone
How cloud-hid batt'ries rain'd red bullets dire,
Volcanic mortars belch'd infernal fire
While baleful bombs that buoy'd in ether rode,
Emblaze the skies, and, fill'd with fate, explode!
Till great Cornwallis, hopeless of relief,
Resign'd whole armies to a greater chief?
Then solemn thanks by blest Columbia giv'n,
With songs of gratitude, rose sweet to heav'n.
What though my lips no common fervour warm'd
To sing th' achievements that his arm perform'd;

[1] Miscellaneous Works, edition of 1804, p. 18.

Though strong as when I follow'd where he led,
Toil'd in his sight, or with his mandates sped,
Or bore his trophies to our *pow'r supreme*,
I sink beneath th' immensity of theme.[1]

The Congress referred the letter of October 27 of the Commander-in-Chief to a special committee, Mr. Randolph, Mr. Boudinot, Mr. Varnum, and Mr. Carroll, which on November 7 made this report:[2]

The Committee to whom the letter of the 27th from General Washington with its inclosures was referred report the following resolutions;

Resolved that an elegant sword be presented in the name of the United States in Congress assembled to Col. Humphreys, aide-de-camp to General Washington to whose care the standards, taken under the capitulation of York, were consigned, as a testimony of their opinion of his fidelity and ability, and that the Board of War take order therein.[3]

After the Colonel's death his widow removed to Paris and took with her such effects of her late husband as she valued, among those his sword presented by Congress. As she died in very reduced circumstances and without any immediate heirs these things became scattered, and it is now impossible to state where this sword is; most probably in the collection of some French gentleman.

A bust of Humphreys, which was given to Yale at the same time as the painting representing the delivery of the standards, was found in the summer of 1902, hidden behind the furnace in the basement of Yale Library. The excuse given at the time, for its being in such a place, was that it was a poor likeness of General Washington. Even if

[1] Miscellaneous Works, edition of 1804, p. 176.
[2] *Journal*, 1781, Reprint, pp. 685, 686.
[3] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington.

that had been true, the bust would in that case have had the greatest possible historical interest because while executed either in Washington's day or shortly after his death, it represented him in a uniform with epaulettes, a uniform which no other representation of Washington ever gave him. The truth of the matter is that the bust portrays Humphreys as he is represented in the picture showing his delivery of the standards. Thus the excuse renders matters even worse and not better. The bust since its discovery in the cellar, has, we are glad to say, been transferred upstairs and put in a place of honour.

Col. Humphreys was formally notified of the Act of Congress in the following manner:

COLONEL HUMPHREYS, AID-DE-CAMP, GEN. WASHINGTON.
PHILADELPHIA, 10th Nov. 1781.

SIR:

I have the pleasure of transmitting to you a copy of the Act of Congress of the 7th instant, expressive of the high opinion they entertain of your ability and integrity, and am, with great respect and esteem,

Sir
Your Sr,
J. H. Presid.[1]

After receiving many attentions from members of Congress and the people of Philadelphia, Col. Humphreys returned to his General. It had been the desire of Washington to complete the Southern campaign by driving the British from the Carolinas and Georgia, which could have been done with comparative ease with the forces then at his command. He formally proposed the plan to Comte de Grasse and requested him to transport the army to

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington. John Hanson was "President of the United States in Congress assembled" in 1781 and 1782. He died in November, 1783.

Charleston. But the Admiral was impatient to be again in the West Indies to resist the strong fleet England was sending in that direction. The troops under St. Simon were a part of the garrison of the French West Indies and could no longer be spared; there was danger of dispersion of the fleet by storms off Cape Hatteras. The operations against Savannah and Charleston might take a longer time than anticipated. These were among the reasons given for his refusal to remain any longer on the coast than would be required to convoy the transports with the American troops to the Head of Elk. The comprehensive plan for a final blow had to be abandoned, and Washington sent to the relief of Gen. Greene two thousand troops under Gen. St. Clair. The main body of the Americans was sent back to the Hudson under the charge of Gen. Lincoln. The French soldiers were to spend the winter at Williamsburg. Washington himself hastened to the death-bed of Mrs. Washington's son, John Parke Custis, at the plantation of Col. Baker at Eltham, after having seen that the troops were embarked. Mr. Custis had served honourably as aide to his step-father at Yorktown, and endeared himself to all who knew him. It is probable that the General was attended by his aides, who after the funeral went with the General to Mount Vernon.

The Congress was desirous to follow up the advantage gained at Yorktown, and wished to consult Washington upon the future conduct of the war. Its request took him and Lady Washington from the seclusion of their home, the contemplation of their loss, and the indulgence of their grief to the gay capital of the Confederation.

The journey to Philadelphia was marked by the most spontaneous and enthusiastic greeting from the people of every place through which they passed. In some towns formal receptions were held and addresses presented. The sober dulness of the newspapers was succeeded tempo-

rarily by brilliancy and extravagance of expression. In its issue for November 28, the Pennsylvania *Journal* makes this announcement:

"Arrived in this city his Excellency General Washington, our victorious and illustrious Commander-in-Chief, with his Lady. All panegyrick is vain and language too feeble to express our idea of his greatness."[1]

General Washington took for the winter the house of Mr. Benjamin Chew on Third Street between Walnut and Spruce. It was convenient and comfortable and had a well laid out garden extending toward the street. Illuminations, receptions, dinners, and theatrical performances were given in his honour.

Col. Humphreys saw his chief domiciled in Philadelphia and then proceeded to the Hudson. His first duty was to provide a suitable house for headquarters near the camp. His efforts are detailed and his military ardour shown in this letter:

PEEKSKILL, Nov. 22d, 1781.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

Upon my arrival at this place, I applied to Colonel Hughs respecting Quarters for your Excellency—As it was imagined the Governors house would be far more convenient than any other, and the Quarter Master having suggested, that Mr. Bedlow's family (being very small) might be accommodated in Cases House the whole of which he would obtain for the purpose,—the proposal was made by him—but some little obstacles occurring, Hosbrooks House was directed to be occupied, as being the next eligible in point of situation & accomodation; altho this was not without its difficulties & objections—but everything is now put in a fair train, I have given a written Requisition to the Quarter-Master for Forage, Fuel, & other necessaries, and beg you will be pursuaded, your Accomodations for the Winter will be as agreeable as possible.

[1] Quoted in Miss Wharton's *Martha Washington*, p. 140.

As I shall have a safe conveyance for this Letter, by Captain Sergeant, I will take the liberty of mentioning to your Excellency some thoughts which have occurred within a few days, relative to an Enterprise against the Enemy on the North End of York Island, at the return of the Troops from the Southward. It appears to me, that the season, and the circumstances of our Army, as well as the situation of the Enemy will be extremely favourable to the execution of the Plan you have formerly had in view, because all the necessary preparations of Boats &c. may be made under pretences of having them ready to transport the Troops Ordnance & stores returning from the Southward—while a sufficient force to carry the Enterprise into execution by Water, as was proposed at the commencement of the Campaign may be detached from this Army for the ostensible purpose of foraging, relieving the outposts, or being employed on some other service which cannot give any suspicion of the real object—at the same time, the march of the Troops from the Southward may be so concerted as that they will reach Fort Lee at any given time, for instance, the morning succeeding the night fixed upon, for the attack—Waterbury Sheldon's & the other Troops on the Lines might also move towards Kingsbridge at the same time to co-operate in that Quarter.

I do not presume to enter into the particulars of the Plan, as I am fully sensible, from the long period it has been in contemplation, the minutest circumstance cannot have escaped your observation—I would wish only to observe, that the Enemy have made it an invariable practice to withdraw all their Guard Ships before Christmas, and that in this case there can be no hazard of making a safe retreat should any unforeseen accident prevent the success of the expedition—that the attempt will be unexpected, if the affair is conducted with that secrecy & discretion, which may be reasonably expected, from our force which may be employed on the occasion, compared with that of the Enemy, altho a compleat surprize should not take place—but that a total surprise would undoubtedly be attended with very important consequences.

On the other hand, I am equally sensible that the adversity

of Wind, Weather, & other Contingencies may frustrate the attempt, or render it abortive in the execution—Whether upon a consideration, of the risque the chance of success, & prospect of advantage with all the attendant circumstances, it may be expedient I pretend not to determine—Should it be judged inexpedient I shall be sorry for having given this trouble—Should the enterprise be esteemed practicable, I shall be happy in contributing any services in my power towards the Arrangement or Execution.

I shall not mention the matter to any person living, unless I shall hear from your Excellency tomorrow I shall get out for Connecticut—Any Commands for me, directed to be left at the Post Office in New Haven will reach me expeditiously, or Gen. Heath could probably be able to find a speedier conveyance. If the attempt should be concluded upon, I should not suppose it could be matured for execution before the night of Christmas, or perhaps New Year.—I will endeavour to be here by the 20th of Dec'r. or, as much earlier as might be necessary, in the mean time I shall obtain (via Horse neck & the Island) the best intelligence possible of the Enemy's Situation, of which I have already had pretty good information.

With every sentiment of attachment & affection I have the honor to be your obedient

D. Humphreys.

His Excellency
Gen. Washington.

(Endorsement)
Peekskill 22 November 1781
from
Col°. Humphreys—
Ans 11. Decembr

The house chosen was in the southern part of the village of Newburgh upon a hill. From its "stoop" to the east were to be seen Fishkill and the rich farming country beyond it. Here the river begins to narrow for the Highlands, and wooded heights and towering mountains are

seen to the north; New Windsor, Plumb Point, Pollopel's Island, and other historic landmarks can be clearly distinguished, and in the far distance West Point can be discerned. This substantial stone house had been built in sections, its northern portion, including the famous dining room with its seven doors, in 1750; its southern portion of the same dimensions in 1770, and a kitchen at a later date.

Gen. Washington's good judgment is shown in his answer to his aide:

To Lieu^t. Colo. David Humphreys, A. D. C.,

Philadelphia, 11th December, 1781.

Dear Sir,

I have received yours of the 22d of November by Captain Sargent, and am obliged by the trouble which you took in securing Quarters for me. It is very uncertain when I shall have occasion to use them, as I am detailed here at the request of Congress, to assist in the arrangments which are making for the next Campaign. As to the Plan which you propose I will only say just now, that there are not the same motives for carrying it into execution or running risks that there were last Summer. Then we could have maintained our advantage if successful, or could by a diversion, have favoured the retreat of our Troops if otherwise.

The severity of the season and uncertainty of the Weather are other reasons which operate against an Enterprise which would take more than one Night to execute.

Should you not find me upon the North River when you arrive there you will come on to this place,

I am with great esteem, dear Sir,
Your mo. obedt. Serv^t
G. Washington.[1]

Washington was besieged by applications for positions in the army or even for any post of consequence. To these he was obliged to turn a deaf ear, and even when Col.

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C.

Willet,[1] who had distinguished himself by his bravery, applied for a position he was obliged to refuse him.

PHILADELPHIA, January 22, 1782.

DEAR SIR,

I yesterday received your letter dated the 4th Inst. The information you had received respecting an alteration in the Establishment of the Army is without foundation. No door is open, therefore, to gratify the wishes of those not in actual service, however meritorious they may be—of the zeal, attachment, and ability you have always displayed in the service of your Country, especially in the last Campaign, no one can be more perfectly convinced than, Dear Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

COLONEL WILLET.[2]

The interviews and plans for the future occupied the Congress and Washington until March, 1782. During this time he with his wife and aides entered into some of the gaieties of the city.

The opinion of Earl Cornwallis that his surrender meant the end of the war was shared by many English statesmen.

Preliminary action looking to a treaty of peace was taken by the British Parliament in February, 1782. With the exception of slight skirmishes in South Carolina and the continued occupation of Charleston and Savannah by the British there was a practical suspension of hostilities. Washington was however unwilling to rely upon its continuance, and thought it necessary to take measures for at least a defensive campaign.

In December, Col. Humphreys enjoyed a brief vacation in his native State, spending his time principally in New Haven and Hartford. President Stiles records in his

[1] Col. Willet afterwards became Mayor of New York.

[2] In the possession of the author. It is written throughout by Col. Humphreys and signed by Washington.

Diary that he spent with the Colonel the evening of December 5, and that "he gave an account of the siege and capture of Lord Cornwallis, he having been present through the whole. He corrected my plan."[1]

Three days later Col. Humphreys set out for Philadelphia. Dr. Stiles says that he "committed to the care of Colonel Humphreys General Washington's Diploma in a tin case to be delivered to his Excellency."[2]

It was accompanied by a letter in which the victorious General was styled "the Deliverer of your Country, the Defender of Liberty and Rights of Humanity, and the Mæcenas of Science and Literature."[3]

It was to the troops who had spent the months of the winter in routine of camp-life a day of rejoicing when the Commander-in-Chief arrived at Newburgh on March 31, 1782, and occupied the Hasbrouck House. Lady Washington at once began to beautify the grounds, and have flower beds bordered with brick prepared in which she herself planted many brilliantly hued flowers. The doors of the house were open to many guests, some of whom, notably the Marquis de Chastellux, have left descriptions of the Headquarters and accounts of their visits.

Upon one occasion, the Marquis relates, he arrived at "Newburgh" at six o'clock and "found M. and Madame Washington, Colonel Tilghman, Colonel Humphreys and Major Walker assembled." He says that "this house, which is built like a Dutch cabin, is neither vast nor commodious." Supper was served at nine o'clock, and the guest chamber he recognized as "the parlour, in which a camp bed had been placed." This was removed in the

[1] Pres. Stiles, *Diary*, ii., p. 570. The plan of Col. Humphreys is reproduced on this page.

[2] President Stiles, *Diary*, ii., p. 571.

[3] The degree of Doctor of Laws had been conferred upon General Washington by the Corporation of Yale College on April 26, 1781. See President Stiles's *Diary*, vii., p. 534.

morning, and the room again "became the reception room for the afternoon."[1]

Here as at Morristown and New Windsor, there was brightness and gaiety.

Many pleasant sociable hours [says a recent writer] were spent in this quaint apartment,[2] when Steuben, La Fayette, Knox and the young staff officers joined the circle round the great fire-place, and Mrs. Washington and her guests, attracted by the merriment in the dining room, would come in from the parlour to enjoy La Fayette's spirited description of his difficulties in finding the way to Knox's quarters to call upon his wife, or when his brother officers chaff Baron Steuben upon his "Hudson whale," which proved to be an eel of rather large dimensions.[3]

A great deal of serious business was also transacted there by Washington and his aides. There had to be a constant inspection and supervision of the commissary department for with an empty Continental treasury it was at times difficult to find food for the men. The contractors for clothing and shoes were also inclined then as now to send inferior articles, practically useless. An instance is shown in this official letter to Colonel Humphreys:

NEW BURGH, August 22d, 1782.

SIR,

A paragraph in the last Inspection Report, pronouncing the shoes that have been issued to the army on account of the current year to be of an "infamous" quality (without a single exception), having greatly alarmed the Clothier General, he has directed me to request the shoes now in this Magazine, may be submitted to the inspection of proper judges, as well

[1] See a full account of this visit, *Voyages de M. le Marquis de Chastellux* vol. ii., Paris, 1786, pp. 234, 235.

[2] The great dining and reception room with seven doors and one window, a picture of which is given in Lossing's *Field Book*, vol. ii., p. 100.

[3] Miss Wharton's *Martha Washington*, p. 145.

to convince the Secretary at War & Financier, that there has been proper pains taken to provide the Army with good shoes, as to wipe off the assertions which, we conceive, we very undeservedly labour under and which we apprehend may have proceeded from misinformation and confining the enquiry to particular cases instead of averaging the consumption of shoes throughout the Army at large and comparing it with the nature of their duty and the ground they are encamped on.

I therefore request that a Committee of Officers, who may be reckoned judges in this matter may be directed to inspect the shoes in the Magazine and make a report of their Quality; —or that two or more workmen of character from the Country, who have not contracted for furnishing shoes, may be appointed for that purpose & let them deliver in upon honour or upon oath, their report, that all may have a chance to clear our selves of the odium that the charge reflects upon us—and which is the more severely felt, as we have been at uncommon pains to procure good shoes for the use of the Army, both with respect to size & quality

I am Sir, with great respect,
Your most obedt. Servant,
D. Brooks,
Asst. C. Gen.

Col. Humphrey,
Aid-de-Camp.[1]

Orders for the issuing of supplies had sometimes to be revised and presented some curious anomalies.

Newburgh, May 4th, 1782.

Sir;

I have spoken with the contractors on the subject of issuing Provisions to the Workmen employed in making clothing for the Army; their answer was to the following purpose—"that by the late arrangement they rescind[2] all former Orders for

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C.

[2] The word "rescind" has been inserted, although the word in the MS. looks like receive; at first "receive" was substituted, then as it did not make sense, "rescind" was suggested.

issuing Provisions to each—and of course that of General Heath for supplying our Workmen, that as his Excellency has resumed the command of the Army, they conceive no other order a sufficient voucher to pass their accounts."

We must therefore either obtain an order from his Excellency, specifying that the Contractors shall continue to issue Rations to the Workmen employed by us in making the clothing for the Army;—or let the work stand still and the hands disperse, until we can obtain an order from the Secretary at War—while considering the Distance & other contingencies I should think myself fortunate if the order reached me in less than twelve or fifteen days. Had I received previous Notice of this matter time enough to have procured the order from the Secretary at War, I would by no means have troubled his Excellency with it,—but until yesterday unadvised any such thing was necessary, as the order from General Heath was neither disputed by the contractors, nor by the superintendent of Finance, upon settlement of their accounts. You may be assured I shall never rouble Head-Quarters with the details of our Business, nor with anything that can be transacted through its proper channels, without being delayed so as to injure the Army, and I conceive the present Instance to be of this kind.

I observed to you yesterday that the workmen's receiving rations is no additional expense to the public as the ull amount is deducted from the price;—but is so much advanced to them, and enables them to go on with their work.

In order to prevent the workmen from doing their own work while they eat the public provision, we calculate the number of suits or garments they make. I subjoin the form of an order that I judge written proper on the Occasion.

I am, Sir, with much respect & esteem,
Your most Obedt. Servt.
D. Brooks,
Asst. C.

Co. Humphry
Aid D. Camp.[1]

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C.

With the arrival of Sir Guy Carleton in May, 1782, as commander-in-chief of the British forces in succession to Sir Henry Clinton there was a revival of the communications concerning peace. He with Admiral Digby had been empowered to state that a bill "had been introduced on the part of the administration authorizing his Majesty to conclude a peace or truce with those who were still denominated the revolted colonies of North America."[1]

But the powers with which they were clothed were not sufficiently definite or full to enable the American army and the American people to do more than courteously treat these proffers of partial conciliation. The Congress also could not consider proposals which were only vague generalities.

In a letter written by Washington at this period he says:

> From the former infatuation, duplicity, and perverse system of British policy I confess I am induced to doubt everything, to suspect everything. . . . Jealousy and precaution at least can do no harm. Too much confidence and supineness may be pernicious in the extreme.[2]

During all these months of life in huts or tents, with a growing feeling that the army was not an object of consideration with the Congress, many officers and soldiers were both impatient and angry at the treatment received by them. They realized the impoverishment of the country, they knew the scarcity of provisions, the practical total loss of purchasing value in the Continental currency. They chafed under the restrictions of their present existence. It required all the tact and ability of the Commander to keep them in good humour and prevent many from deserting. In the meantime hostilities had ceased in the South. Gen. Wayne crossing into Georgia and pro-

[1] Marshall's *Washington*, iv., p. 569.
[2] Quoted in Irving's *Washington*, iv., p. 403.

ceeding to attack small outposts found the garrisons already on the march for Savannah. It was the plan of the British Ministry that the frontier posts and those on the Atlantic should be held but all offensive campaigning should cease. Even the Indian allies were not allowed to go forth on their sanguinary expeditions. Reprisals and acts of retaliation were still made in various parts of the country. One that excited great indignation and aroused all Americans was the hanging on April 12, 1782, of Capt. Joseph Huddy, who lived at Colt's Neck, near Freehold, New Jersey, by a band of twelve refugees under Capt. Lippincott. He was falsely accused of being concerned in the death of Philip White, a well-known Tory, violent and vindictive. At the foot of the Navesink Hills on a gallows made of mere rails he was cruelly treated and then hanged. This legend was affixed to his breast, "Up goes Huddy for Philip White."

When the matter was brought, as it speedily was, to the attention of Washington he wrote at once to Sir Henry Clinton demanding that Capt. Lippincott should be given up to the Americans. This request was refused but it was promised that an investigation should be made into the cause of the death of Capt. Huddy. Washington then, on May 3, 1782, wrote to Brig.-Gen. Hazen, who commanded the post at Lancaster, Pa., where the British prisoners were confined, to choose by lot a British officer of equal rank and send him under close guard to the American camp to suffer for murder of Capt. Huddy. It fell upon a Captain of the Guard, Charles Asgill, a young man of great promise, only nineteen years old. He was committed to the custody of Col. Elias Dayton of the Second New Jersey, then stationed near Chatham, New Jersey. He was ordered to treat the prisoner with kindness but to keep a strict guard over him. With great forbearance Washington delayed his execution and al-

lowed him every privilege possible. A wave of sympathy for him went over the country and England. His mother's efforts were unceasing to effect the release of her son. Congress, the French Minister of State, Comte de Vergennes, and influential persons both in America and Europe were appealed to. Finally in November Congress ordered Washington to release him, which that humane man did with great cheerfulness, writing to him a courteous and fatherly note. In after years Washington's action was denounced as harsh and cruel. It was said that even Capt. Asgill joined in the abuse of the General.

While the British and American commanders were exchanging letters of courtesy but each acting on the defensive, active negotiations for a treaty of peace were in progress in Paris. The fall of Lord North's Ministry and the succession of the Marquis of Rockingham in March, 1782, brought about a declaration for peace in the British Parliament and the sending of Richard Oswald to consult with Comte de Vergennes concerning the terms which would be acceptable. Commissioners were appointed by Congress to act on behalf of the United States. Four of them, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, John Jay and Henry Laurens, were already in Europe, the fifth Commissioner, Thomas Jefferson, did not serve. It is largely due to the keenness of John Jay, and the punctiliousness of John Adams for the rights under the New England Charters in the north-west that the boundary line included all the territory to the Mississippi and that bordering on the Great Lakes to the eastern line of Louisiana. Dr. Franklin's long residence in France and intimate acquaintance with the ministers of Louis led him to trust them implicitly, while the more judicial mind of John Jay and the naturally suspicious caution of Adams caused them to weigh carefully every proposition and accept only that which would be for the benefit of the United

States. To their views Franklin finally came, but without giving up his faith in the integrity of Comte de Vergennes. The negotiations were long and deliberate and it was not until November 30, 1782, that the preliminary treaty of peace with the United States was signed by the four American Commissioners and Mr. Oswald. As the treaty was made without the knowledge or consent of the French Minister he complained of bad faith on the part of the American Commissioners but did not make any formal or diplomatic complaint. All efforts by Mr. Jay, who was the special commissioner for that purpose, to treat either at Madrid or with the Spanish Minister at Paris, Count d'Arada, for a treaty defining the rights of the United States in the navigation of the Mississippi and adjusting the boundary between the new nation and the Spanish possessions were unavailing. The passage of a bill by the British Parliament on July 25, 1782, to enable the King to consent to the independence of the Colonies cleared the way for an actual and formal cessation of hostilities.

CHAPTER XIII

The Summer of 1782

American and French Encampments in the Summer of 1782—Plan for Fresh Campaign Drawn up by Humphreys—New Edition of his Address to the Armies—His Report on the Condition of the Army—Discontent of the Army owing to Arrears of Pay—Washington's General Orders on the Subject—Meeting of the Officers Called by Washington—His Address—Reply of the Officers—Humphreys' Account of the Meeting in Letter to Gen. Lincoln—Final Action of Congress—Settlement of the Pay of the Army—Treaty of Peace Signed between Great Britain, France and Spain—Proclamation of Peace by Washington.

DURING the summer of 1782 the French and American armies were once more encamped near each other.

The French were at Crompond about ten miles east of West Point. It was the last time they would be together as it was the intention of Rochambeau to conduct his troops to the seat of war in the Fall. There were many exchanges of visits and dinners between the officers, but unfortunately the commissary department could not command any large supply or variety of provisions, and it was, writes Washington to Gen. Lincoln, then Secretary of the Board of War, mortifying that even the general officers "cannot invite a French officer, or a visiting friend, or a travelling acquaintance, to a better repast than whiskey hot from the still, and not always that, and a bit of beef without vegetables will afford them."[1]

[1] Quoted in Irving's *Washington*, vol. iv., p. 404.

In addition to his routine duties, Col. Humphreys found time to formulate a well considered plan of campaign for 1782, while the army was encamped near Newburgh. Like his chief he was still distrustful of the sincerity of the British Cabinet and voiced the universal conviction at that time of the necessity "in the present state of our affairs, as well as those of the enemy to prosecute the war offensively." His plan was completed on April 7, but was not submitted to Washington until June, 1782. Some of the suggestions made in it were then inapplicable as he states in a note, since the French had taken Demerara and Essequibo in Guiana, and the Islands of St. Eustathius, St. Christopher, Nevis, Montserrat, and the Bahamas.

The paper deserves to be better known, as not only will it enhance the military reputation of Humphreys, but it clearly shows that the entourage of Gen. Washington were not certain that the British would ratify the peace negotiations. Washington, as we have seen, shared that view, although now that he was in Philadelphia and in touch with the political leaders of the country he was better able to form a sound judgment on the prospects of peace than his aide, who was away on the Hudson River. The plans formulated by Humphreys were all wise, and there is little doubt that if the British had elected to continue the war that an attack on Canada would certainly have been the next point in the American campaign.

MEMORANDUM FOR HIS EXCELLENCY
THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. April 7th, 1782.

In consequence of the frequent encouragement your Excellency has given me to suggest freely whatever might occur which appeared beneficial to the public Interest, I have the honour to submit the following observations respecting the

Object of the Campaign for your consideration & further decision.

In the first place, I believe we may venture to assert as the governing principle for the conduct of our operations, that it is universally expected, and, will be absolutely necessary, in the present state of our affairs, as well as those of the Enemy to prosecute the War *Offensively* on our part the ensuing Campaign. This being conceded, these things are essentially requisite to be known before a definite plan of operation can be fixed upon, viz; first, whether we may calculate upon being aided by the naval *force* of our Ally? and secondly, whether the Enemy will hold their present Posts or concentrate all their Troops at one place.

Before these points are fully ascertained, it may be useful however, to speculate upon the various contingencies which can happen so as to be prepared to decide and act, on the moment, as circumstances shall require.

Should the Enemy draw their whole force to a single point, there can be no difficulty as to the object—the only question will in that case be, whether with all our combined land and naval force (granting the French fleet to have arrived), we shall be able to make the attack with a probability of success. And here I suppose nothing would be left to our choice but to call forth the utmost resources of the Country make one great effort, & trust the issue to Providence. But upon the supposition the Enemy should determine to hold their Garrisons as at present, and supposing we might be assured that a fleet of our Allies would be on the Coast & secure the command of the Water for a definite time; if then our land Forces in conjunction with the French troops should be deemed competent to the reduction of the place in the given place of time, New York would undoubtedly be the Object, as being vastly the most important in every point of view—but if on the other hand our force should be too weak, or the continuance of the fleet too short to afford a tolerable prospect of the capture of New York, there would be no alternative left, but to make an attempt against the Garrison of Charles Town the reduction of which tho' inferior in its consequence to the former, would be

a propitious event & extremely interesting to the common cause.

It will be remembered that each of the foregoing conclusions are founded upon the hypothesis of a Naval Co-operation— There are three other cases respecting the Enemy in this Department, which present themselves to our view upon the supposition that no Squadron of our friends may be expected on the Coast, Viz;

"Is there a prospect of succeeding in a Seige against New York without the assistance of a Naval force?" 2nd—"Can any enterprize or *coup de main* against that garrison upon a great scale, promise success without the aid of a fleet?" & 3dly —"Can the Enemy by a land force only be so streightened in their quarters as to be compelled to evacuate the Town, before we should be forced by the season to give over the Blockade."—Without presuming to determine positively on the event of either projects, I will beg leave to say that the success appears to me, to be too precarious for practice, & the consequence of failure too disastrous; if any other plan of activity (even upon a smaller scale) can be devised which promises a more prosperous issue,—I do not here take into consideration an operation by land against Charles Town, because I conceive the transportation of heavy Cannon, etc. would alone render it abortive.

Let us now inquire whether anything can be done elsewhere, without Naval assistance; to prevent our wasting this Campaign in inactivity, & incurring a considerable expense without attaining any important end,—thereby discouraging our Countrymen with the accumulating burdens of the War, exhausting imperceptibly the Resources of the Country, exciting perpetual murmurs against Forces which are never paid, opening a door to the insidious arts of the Enemy, and suffering the Contest to be still protracted (after the repeated blows the Enemy have received), without being able to compel them to acknowledge our Independence.

If our finances would possibly admit of it, there is a Quarter to which the Armies of America might be turned, under circumstances the most propitious to produce the wished for

success; I need not mention this is an Expedition to Canada—as I am pursuaded (tho' I never have seen or heard a word written or spoken on the subject) that it has not escaped your contemplation. The present state of affairs seems particularly to invite to this operation the weakness of the Enemy's Garrisons (calculating upon the Troops left there in 77 & those which may have gone since) the widely distant Posts they occupy in so extensive a Country, the favourable disposition of the Inhabitants, by all the reports of spies & other accounts—the decidedly superior force we should be able to carry into that Country, even supposing the french Troops should not be at liberty to act there, because we could in that case make use of almost the whole of our Army on that service, leaving our allies to oppose the Enemy here and the formidable apparatus we could carry with us if our finances would furnish the Means of transportation.—

While all the great preparations might be made under the idea of the Seige of New York; nor need any circumstances indicate the real design until the project is ripe for execution. Nothing could contribute more to the happy issue of the attempt than the unprepared situation of the Enemy for an invasion, the perfect secrecy with which it might be concerted, & the almost total surprise by which it might be carried into effect.

If this plan should be adopted or measures taken with an eventual reference to it; the information from Gen'l Bayley, Betti's the Spy, & other quarters, that an expedition from Canada is meditated against our frontiers might be made use of as a pretext for drawing our force to & laying up Magazines in the Northern Department. And indeed everything might be so calculated as to favour the object; in case there should be but a remote prospect of making an autumnal or Winter Campaign in that Country after it becomes certain the whole territory is left to its own fate, by being precluded from reinforcement or succour of any kind untill the disolution of the snows & opening of the River.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the glory that would result from the success of this expedition, the unspeakable blow it

would give to the Enemy's affairs, or the importance of the acquisition to us; considering it in the light of producing a pacification. We should then have such an equivalent to offer in lieu of any possessions the British might hold in the United States at the commencement of the negotiation, as must remove the innumerable obstacles, which would otherwise produce great embarrassment and trouble in the course of that business.

Without some such counterbalance what shall we have to oppose to their pleas of uti possitetis or how shall we get over the difficulties which will be raised respecting the property of their adherents, that has been confiscated & sold by the States? In fine it is uncertain whether the capture of New York itself would operate more speedily & efficaciously to produce the acknowledgement of our Independence & a satisfactory Peace, than the reduction of the Enemy's power in Canada—If then the objects should appear equally interesting & decisive that which has the most facility & certainty in its execution (all circumstances considered), is undoubtedly to be preferred to the others. In the prosecution of this, on which I am speaking, partial success, it is almost demonstrable, must attend us, whether that is sufficient to outweigh the chance of failure in the main point, or whether we may not with propriety extend our ideas to the universal reduction of the whole Province is humbly submitted. I will only add, if our finances could not be enabled to furnish ample means, on so great an occasion; Military coertion might then be used & would probably be borne with cheerfulness—and perhaps the slumbering Genius of the Nation might be roused to those astonishing efforts, which after a period of languor, have frequently characterized the States, in the progress of this War.——

D. Humphreys.

P. S. The foregoing observations were thrown together at the time of the date—perhaps some of the observations may now be inapplicable as the disaster in the West Indies &c. was not then known——[1]

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington.

To assign in vigorous verse their true places to his fellow "Columbians" who had fought and suffered for their country, and thus encourage them to endure to the end of the war, was the original intention of Col. Humphreys when he wrote, five years before, the original draft of his "Address to the Armies of the United States." He now, in his few leisure hours, undertook a thorough revision of the first edition of the poem and put it away for future publication. It is possible that the General and other members of his household may have been favoured with readings from it.

A visit by Col. Humphreys to the upper posts while the army was near Peekskill brought forth this letter in which some of the causes of discontent with camp life and the preference for an active campaign are hinted at.

NEWBURGH, July 15th, 1782.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I forward to your excellency the Report of the Dep'y Q: Master, the Forage & Waggon Master Genl on the subject of Forage, together with their estimate of the Quantity necessary, and Plan for obtaining it; in hopes that these papers may come to your hands before you shall have left Philadelphia, that the opinion of the Financier may be taken, and definite arrangements be made on the spot. The Estimate of Wood required for the use of the Garrison of West Point and its Dependencies is also enclosed. I shall only beg leave to observe on the mode which has formerly been adopted for obtaining a supply, that it was always pernicious to the service, & that it will in the present instance be vastly more irksome & detrimental than ever it has been. I have mixed in company with officers very much, within the four days & find them exceedingly distressed at the daily diminution of their Regiments in consequence of the increasing calls for Artificers, fatigue, & men for other contingent purposes; and I am extremely apprehensive after all the inevitable deductions which have been & must be made, that the number of men engaged

for the Campaign only will be totally inadequate to the task which is to be imposed on them.—Unless a Contract or some new mode for obtaining Wood should be devised the Alternative will therefore be, that the Garrisons must remain unsupplied with fuel, or a large Draft a considerable time in cutting, hauling, & transporting it, services quite foreign to the spirit of their profession; & in the practice of which, the loss of discipline will certainly succeed, & a train of Evils will be induced, which I forbear to enumerate, because I know they will but too readily occur to your Excellency. No Dispatches have arrived from New York—four Deserters came in yesterday, three German & one British, but could give no intelligence worthy of communication—

With purest sentiments of veneration & attachment I have the honor to be Your Excellency's

Most devoted humble Servant,
D. HUMPHREYS.

His Excellency
GEN. WASHINGTON.

The Colonel had now been for two years a member of the General's staff and been honoured by that great man in various ways. His title of Colonel was only by courtesy for he had never been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, to which his position entitled him. An application on the subject was referred to the Secretary at War, who made on July 5, 1782, this report:

WAR OFFICE, July 5, 1782.

SIR:

By the resolves of Congress on the fifth of June 1776 the rank of Lieutenant Colonel was given to the aides-de-Camp to the Commander-in-Chief—and on the 24 of March 1777 their pay was established agreeably to their rank—since which no resolves have passed relative to the pay and rank of the Aides to the Commander-in-Chief.

Lieut. Col. Humphreys was appointed Aid-de-Camp to the Commander in Chief on the 23rd of June 1780 and having

never received a commission as Lieutenant Colonel, now applies for it.

As all appointments under the grade of General Officers are with the several States—and as commissions have been issued only on their certificates I do not conceive myself authorized, without an express order of Congress to issue the commission requested by Colonel Humphreys although I have a very high sense of his merit and of the importance of his service.

I beg the directions of Congress in this matter.

I have the honor to be with profound respect,

Your Excellency's most Obedient Servant,

B. Lincoln.

His Excellency

The President of Congress.[1]

With several other matters relating to the service this report was referred to a committee on reducing expenditures, Mr. Osgood, Mr. Bland, and Mr. Duane. The committee made on October 28 a report in which it was recommended "That a commission of Lieutenant Col. issue to Humphreys, one of the Aide-de-Camp of the Commander-in-Chief to bear date from the 23d. of June 1780."[2]

To officers and men the Winter with its lack of occupation excepting the usual routine inspection and drill, and no prospect of any active hostilities, while it brought a certain exultation that the war was nearing its close, yet revived strongly the many difficulties they had encountered and anxiety as to the large amount due to them for back pay.

In the hours of idleness many schemes were devised to obtain a promise that this should be received. But they knew the treasury of the Confederation was almost empty; they knew that it would be very hard to obtain the money

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington.

[2] *Ibid.* (Blank in the original.)

required for this purpose in any undepreciated form. Finally, a meeting was held, in December, of the officers in the cantonments upon the subject of the commutation of the half pay promised to them, present pay, back pay, settlement of accounts for deficiencies in clothing and rations and compensation. A committee of three influential officers, General McDougall, Col. Ogden, and Col. Brooks, was chosen to present and explain the Memorial adopted by the meeting, to Congress. That body received it graciously, listened to it respectfully and referred the Memorial to a committee of one from each State to consider and report. On January 26, 1783, a report was made and a series of resolutions adopted directing the financier to make such payment and in such measure as he shall think proper "whenever the state of the treasury would allow." The several States were to be called upon "to complete without delay the settlements with their respective lines of the army up to the first day of August, 1783."

Congress also declared its intention to obtain from the States "substantial funds adequate to funding the whole debt of the United States." This action was vague and unsatisfactory to those who were needing at once their just dues. To those who had risked their lives and fortunes for the liberty of their country these measures seemed to be both inadequate and evasive. The murmur of discontent was still louder and found expression in a strong, anonymous address, which was circulated among the officers. It dwelt upon the writer's own conception of patriotism and his ardent feeling of love and devotion, the assurance he had that a grateful country would not allow those who had spent nearly eight years in arduous service both in battle and garrison, who had been scantily fed and clothed to spend their old age in distress and poverty. He had thought their plea for justice would be

met with something more substantial than ambiguous phrases. He suggested that a last remonstrance to Congress be drawn up. "Let it be represented in language that will neither dishonour you by its rudeness, nor betray you by its fears, what has been promised by Congress and what has been performed." He proceeds to say:

> that the slightest mark of indignity from Congress now must operate like the grave and part you for ever: that in any political event the Army has its alternative. If peace that nothing shall separate you from your arms but death; if war, that courting the auspices, and inviting the directions of your illustrious leader, you will retire to some unsettled country, smile in your turn, [and] mock when your fear cometh: But let it represent also that should they comply with the request of your late memorial it would make you more happy and them more respectable.

Such an address would only inflame and irritate men already impatient and often impecunious, and lead to some course of action which might menace the new and dearly bought freedom. On the same day, March 10, an anonymous circular summoned the officers of the Army to assemble in the "new building" known as the Temple, "to consider the late letter from their representatives in Philadelphia, and what measures (if any), should be adopted to obtain that redress of grievances which they seem to have solicited in vain."

To Washington this outburst of indignation and unmilitary method of obtaining just rights was not unexpected, for he had in October, 1782, predicted it in a letter to Gen. Lincoln, Secretary at War. He sympathized with the distress, he knew the jealousy and fear of the army which animated a portion of Congress, but he also knew that to keep the army in peace and quietness during these months of waiting required firmness and decision;

any disturbance then would only aggravate the prevailing dread, among the people, of a standing army.

In his "General Orders" for March 11, the Commander-in-Chief characterized the call and address as "irregular and disorderly," his own duty as well as the reputation and true interest of the army required his "disapprobation" of them. He requested "the general and field officers with one officer from each company and a proper representation from the staff of the army, to assemble at twelve on Saturday, the 15th, at the new building to hear the report of the Committee deputed by the Army to Congress."[1]

This course recalled those who had been led away from the subordination so necessary in the army to their loyalty to the unwritten military law. It made harmless the eloquent and desperate words of the anonymous upholder of the claims of the Continental officers. He issued a brief triumphal address on March 12, in which he claimed the Commander-in-Chief's approval of the plan proposed by him. By personal interviews with many officers, Washington convinced them that the propositions of the address were both rash and revolutionary, and if the officers should carry them out there could not be any hope for an enduring peace or real prosperity in the land. At the time appointed the room, which was used also for social gatherings on week days and as a church on Sundays, was filled. Everyone was expectant until Washington entered with his staff, and took his place upon a small raised platform. By the General's assignment Gen. Gates as senior officer was made chairman of the meeting. With the dignity and solemnity which was natural to him, but with a countenance grave, and with a look of affectionate regard for his companions in arms, many of whom had been with him since he took command

[1] Marshall's *Washington*, iv., p. 594.

of the army under the great elm at Cambridge, Washington arose to present his views to the assembly.

A pathetic interest was aroused when after reading the first paragraph of his address he put on his spectacles with the words: "You see, Gentlemen, that I have grown grey in your service, and now find myself going blind." An eye-witness says "there was something so natural, so unaffected in this appeal as rendered it superior to the most studied oratory; it forced its way to the heart, and you might see sensibility moisten every eye."[1]

After deprecating the "anonymous summons" as "unmilitary" and "subversive to all order and discipline," he characterized the address as an appeal "more to the feelings and passions than to the reason and judgment of the Army." He then goes on to consider how it was designed "to answer the most insidious purposes," and had been drawn with great art. His own attitude to the army is alluded to. "If my own conduct heretofore has not evinced to you that I have been a faithful friend to the army my declaration of it at this time would be equally unavailing and improper." He considers in detail the propositions of the address, and shows that they would be the ruin both of the army and the people by sowing discord between them.

He declares that moderate measures will have greater effect than the threatenings of the writer of the address. He gives to the assembled officers his solemn assurance "that in the attainment of complete justice for all your toils and dangers, and in the gratification of every wish so far as it may be done consistently with the great duty I owe my country and those powers we are bound to respect, you may freely command my services to the utmost extent of my abilities." He entreats them to rely on

[1] Diary of Major-General Shaw, quoted in Irving's *Washington*, vol. v., p. 415.

"the plighted faith of your country, and place a full confidence in the purity of the intentions of Congress," and also asks them "in the name of our common country, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the man who wishes under any specious pretences to overturn the liberties of our country, and who wickedly attempts to open the flood gates of civil discord and deluge our rising empire in blood." In thus acting they will give another proof of "unexampled patriotism and patient virtue," and "by the dignity of your conduct afford occasion for posterity to say when speaking of the glorious example you have exhibited to mankind, 'Had this day been wanting the world had never seen the last stage of perfection to which human nature is capable of attainment.'"[1]

He was heard with profound attention and approval. When he had finished the address he read a letter from the Hon. Joseph Jones of Congress, in which he showed the difficult position of that body, but was confident that substantial justice would be done to the army. Washington then bowed with his usual courteous grace and withdrew, leaving the officers the opportunity freely to express their opinions. A resolution was offered by Gen. Knox and seconded by Gen. Rufus Putnam, assuring Washington that "the officers reciprocated his affectionate expressions with the greatest sincerity of which the human heart is capable." Gen. Knox, Col. Brooks, and Capt. Howard were then appointed to draft a series of resolutions, and report to the meeting in half an hour. Upon its report the resolutions were unanimously adopted. They declared in substance that those gathered had engaged in the service of their country "out of purest love, and

[1] The address in full will be found in the *Journals of Congress*, viii., pp. 180–183; Marshall's *Washington*, iv., pp. 590–604; Lossing's *Field Book of the Revolution*, ii., pp. 109–110. It is summarized on pp. 412–415, Irving's *Washington*, iv.

attachment to the rights and liberties of human nature," that the army continued to have an unshaken confidence in the justice of Congress and their country, that "his Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief be requested to write to his Excellency, the President of Congress, entreating the most speedy decision of that honourable body upon the subject of our late address," that:

> the officers of the American army view with abhorrence, and reject with disdain, the infamous propositions contained in a late anonymous address to the officers of the Army, and resent with indignation the secret attempts of some unknown persons to collect the officers together in a manner totally subversive of all discipline and good order; that the thanks of the officers of the Army be given to the Committee who presented to Congress the late address of the Army.[1]

The quiet and sympathetic course of Washington had allayed an irritation which might have seriously affected the whole country, and brought upon the army dislike and odium. In his General Orders upon March 18, the Commander-in-Chief expressed his complete satisfaction with the action of the officers. On March 19, he forwarded to Congress all the documents concerning it. All who were privileged to see Washington at this crisis in his career gained a fuller knowledge of his reserve force, his statesmanship and ability to sway the minds of men. The profound impression made upon Col. Humphreys by this incident is shown in his letter to Gen. Lincoln:

NEWBURGH, March 19th, 1783.

DEAR SIR:—

I have had the honour to receive your favour of the 27th of Feby. and am infinitely obliged by your attention to me.

[1] The resolutions in full will be found on pp. 604–606, Marshall's *Washington*, iv.; in part in Lossing's *Field Book of the Revolution*, ii., p. 110; and they are summarized in Irving's *Washington*, iv., p. 416.

The Express who will hand this to you, bears the Commander-in-Chief's dispatches to Congress containing the Result of the Proceedings on Saturday last. It was a proud day for the Army & ought not to be forgotten in the Annals of America. Matters have terminated completely to our wishes. Those who have seen General Washington at the head of our Army on the day of Battle & in the most awful & glorious attitude to which a human character can ever aspire, think he appeared unspeakably greater on a late occasion than ever he did before. I am well assured it is the general sentiment that the whole Proceedings commenced with the memorial presented to Congress by Genl McDougal, Cols Ogden & Brooks with all the subsequent Reports Resolutions &c. ought to be made public to the World. The whole transaction ought to be *known*. It will do honour to the Army, it will do honour to the Country, it will do honour to human Nature.

With the most perfect respect I have the honour to be Dr Sir

Your most Obedt Servt.
D. Humphreys.

Gen. Lincoln.[1]

The happy termination of their appeals brought joy and relief to the officers. It was soon followed by a general rejoicing throughout the country, for on March 24, 1783, a vessel of Comte d' Estaing's squadron, the *Triumph*, which had sailed from Cadiz, Spain, brought dispatches from La Fayette to the President of Congress that a preliminary treaty of peace had been signed at Paris by the representatives of Great Britain, France and Spain on January 20, 1783. This made operative the preliminary treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain, signed in November, 1782. Rumours of the treaty had previously reached this country, and on March 12, Capt. Barney, in the packet *Washington*,

[1] Original in Vose Collection of Autographs.

brought the news from L'Orient to Philadelphia. It was not until early in April that a copy of the declaration of the preliminary articles of peace, attested by the signatures of the American Commissioners, was laid before Congress. That body then proclaimed a cessation of hostilities and withdrew from the ocean its armed cruisers. The copy of the proclamation sent to Washington reached headquarters on April 17. He took occasion to make the announcement of the proclamation a time of joyful and solemn thanksgiving. In his General Orders for April 18, he said that the proclamation of the cessation of hostilities would be read on the following day at twelve o'clock at the new building, and on the evening of that day the proclamation would be read "at the head of every regiment and corps of the Army, after which the chaplains with the several brigades will render thanks to Almighty God for all His Mercies, particularly for his overruling the wrath of man to his own glory."[1]

The ceremony at the Temple was memorable and impressive. It was on the eighth anniversary of the battle of Lexington, a fact which was noted in the General Orders. Prayer was offered by the Rev. Mr. Ganno, one of the most popular chaplains of the army. Hundreds of manly voices sounded in singing an elaborate anthem, "Independence," and the hills echoed with the shouts of the soldiers and the thunder of the artillery salutes when the proclamation was read.

It was indeed, as the Commander-in-Chief wrote in his General Orders, the opening of the prospect "to a more splendid scene, and like another morning star promises the approach of a brighter day than hath hitherto illumined the western hemisphere."[2]

[1] Marshall's *Washington*, Appendix, iv., p. 13.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

CHAPTER XIV

Peace and Washington's Farewell

Definition by Congress of the Term of Service—Origin of the Society of the Cincinnati—Its Constitution—Its Emblems—Negotiations between Washington and Carleton for the Transfer of all Property—Washington's Circular to the Governors of the States—Humphreys' Duties Incident to the Conclusion of the War—Washington's Trip through the State of New York—His Visit to Princeton—Mutiny of Pennsylvania Militiamen—Official Notice Received of the Signing of the Treaty of Peace—Proclamation by Congress—Farewell General Orders of Washington—Humphreys' Description—Entry of Washington into the City of New York—His Farewell to his Officers—At Fraunces' Tavern—Washington Files his Accounts of Expenditures during War—Goes to Annapolis—Is Received by Congress—Attended by Humphreys—Enters Senate Chamber—Resigns his Commission—His Farewell Address—Retires with Humphreys from Senate Chamber—End of the Military Career of David Humphreys.

ON the proclamation of peace many soldiers became desirous to return to their homes and their long-neglected secular occupations. The officers found increasing difficulty in preserving the strict discipline essential in an army. Under these circumstances the Commander-in-Chief sought from Congress a definition of the term of service of the men who had enlisted for the war, and also made the suggestion that the soldiers be allowed to retain their arms. "It would be," says the General, "an honourable testimonial from Congress of the regard they bear to these distinguished worthies, and the sense they have of their sufferings, virtues and service."[1]

[1] Irving's *Washington*, iv., pp. 421, 422.

Congress acted promptly and determined that the service of all the soldiers did not end until the definite treaty of peace had been signed, but furloughs might be granted to such soldiers as were thought worthy of that favour.

Acting upon this permission many of the troops solicited that indulgence, which was granted to so large a number that soon the camp held merely the skeleton of an army. The furloughs were granted so judiciously and at such intervals that at no time was there a large number of soldiers on the march through towns or villages, but they went singly or in small groups of those bound for the same locality.

These brave men, showing the marks of exposure, and often wounds which permanently disabled them, were joyously greeted and made welcome by the farmers along their way, and in return for the food served them would, after the manner of soldiers, proudly show their ancient flintlocks and tell of the battles they had been engaged in.

It was during those days of their service that the officers of the Continental army, who had lived in great amity, felt the need of some method of perpetuating the friendships they had formed, and keeping alive in their own families the bravery, glory and danger encountered in the eight years of strife which were now ending. They wished that in the new nation there should always be a memory of the brilliancy as well as the perils of the Revolution. They desired that the widows and orphans of their companions and friends who had fallen in the contest should be aided by their efforts. While the wish seems to have been general among the officers the plan of a society to embody it is attributed to Gen. Knox. Dr. William Eustis, who was then Assistant to Dr. Thatcher in the military hospital near New Windsor, afterwards Secretary of War

and Governor of Massachusetts, in a letter published a few months after its organization attributes the first formal suggestion to Capt. Richmond of Maryland who at that time was an aide-de-camp to Gen. Gates. Dr. Eustis was to formulate a constitution and together they were to consult upon the membership of the society. Simultaneously the officers at West Point had taken preliminary steps for the same purpose, and both Dr. Eustis and Capt. Richmond entered heartily into the effort to make the society successful.[1]

The meeting for the organization was held on May 10, 1783, at "the Cantonment of the American Army on Hudson River." Baron Steuben, the senior officer present, presided; a draft of "proposals" for such a society was read and considered paragraph by paragraph, to which some amendments were proposed. It was agreed that a committee to revise the "proposals" should be chosen and report to a future meeting.

Major-Gen. Knox, Brig.-Gen. Hand, Brig.-Gen. Huntington and Capt. Shaw were then elected. At a meeting held on May 13, at Baron Steuben's headquarters at the Verplanck House, Fishkill, the amended "proposals" were adopted as the Constitution of "The Society of the Cincinnati." Its membership was to include the officers of the American army, and their male descendants in the direct line, "and in failure thereof, the collateral branches." Its officers were to be a President General, a Secretary General and a Treasurer General. Each officer was to give a month's pay to form the general benevolent fund of the Society. State Societies with their own officers were to be formed whenever practicable. They were at liberty to constitute County Societies.

Col. L'Enfant of the Engineer Corps designed "an

[1] Memorials of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati, edited by James M. Bugbee, Boston, printed for the Society, 1890, p. 560.

order by which the members shall be known and distinguished, which shall be a medal of gold of a proper size to receive the emblems, and suspended by a deep blue ribbon two inches wide, edged with white, descriptive of the union of France and America." The principal emblem on the medal was to be Cincinnatus to whom three senators are presenting "a sword and the other military ensigns," while in the background is a field with "his wife standing at the door of their cottage, near it a plough and instruments of husbandry." The motto around the rim is *Omnia reliquit servare rempublicam*. On the reverse, a rising sun, the open gates of a city and vessels entering the harbour. The figure of Fame crowning Cincinnatus with a wreath inscribed *Virtutis Praemium*. Below are hands joined supporting a heart, with the motto *Esto perpetua*. The legend around the rim is *Societas Cincinnatorum, Instituta A. D. 1783*.

A committee consisting of Gen. Heath, Gen. Steuben and Gen. Knox was appointed "to wait on his Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief with a copy of the institution, and request him to honour the Society by placing his name at the head of it." Gen. Henry Knox was chosen the first Secretary General, and Gen. Alexander McDougal the first Treasurer General. It has been supposed by some writers that Washington planned the order, and prepared its constitution. But this is now found to be an error. The draft from which the constitution was prepared is in existence in the handwriting of Capt. Shaw, who was Secretary of the Committee on organization. There is a preceding draft in the handwriting of Gen. Knox and to him is now given the honour of shaping the aims and scope of the Order. It is a significant fact that the name of no one of the General's military family appears on the original roll of the Cincinnati. It shows the high sense of delicacy which Washington possessed that

he refrained from advising or influencing the officers of the army upon this matter.[1]

The subsequent attachment of the officers of the staff to the Society, known as the Cincinnati, and the acceptance by Washington of the presidency of it, shows that he approved its patriotic purpose and was willing to give it the sanction of his name and influence.

Negotiations between Sir Guy Carleton and Gen. Washington were begun in May for the transfer of all places held by the British and the delivery of such property as the treaty required to be given up to the Americans; a special commission, Hon. Egbert Benson, Col. William S. Smith, and Daniel Parker, was appointed to take charge of all matters connected with the carrying out of the seventh article of the treaty in relation to "Royalists." A circular letter written on June 8, 1783, to the Governors of the States expressed his satisfaction that "the great object for which he had the honour to hold an appointment in the service of my country" had now been accomplished: and that he was "preparing to return to that domestic retirement which it is well known I left

[1] The best authorities upon the Society of the Cincinnati are:

Proceedings of the Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati. To which is prefixed the General Institution of the Order as originally planned, and afterwards altered at the General Meeting in May, 1784. Published by Direction of that State's Society, Philadelphia: Printed by John Steele in Second Street. MDCCLXXXV. VII. Vols.

Memorials of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati, 1890.

Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati formed by the Officers of the American Army of the Revolution, and from the Transactions of the New York Society, by John Schuyler, Secretary. Printed for the Society by Douglas Taylor, New York.

Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, vol. i. Transactions, 1892–1894. Boston, published by the Society, 1895. Capt. Shaw's draft of amended "proposals" is given facsimile from the original in possession of the Society between p. 238 and 239; also in print Gen. Knox's original draft, an account of the Society, and an address by Mr. Abner Goodell, pp. 238–254.

with the greatest reluctance." He then alluded to the condition and prospects of the American people with their "absolute freedom and independency," and their "possession of a vast tract of continent," which produced all "the necessaries and conveniences of life." He spoke gravely and clearly of this time of their political probation, and said that at "the present crisis silence in me would be a crime." He outlined what he considered the bulwarks of the perpetuity and prosperity of the United States under four heads, "an indissoluble union of the States under one federal head," "a sacred regard to public justice in discharging debts and fulfilling contracts," the adoption of a "proper peace establishment, in which care should be taken to place the militia throughout the union on a regular, uniform, and efficient footing," and "a disposition among the people of the United States to forget local prejudices and policies, to make mutual concessions and to sacrifice individual advantages to the interests of the community." Each of these propositions he supports with lucid and strong arguments. An affectionate, earnest manner is his as he bids "adieu to your Excellency as the Chief Magistrate of your State, at the same time I bid a last farewell to the cares of office and all the employments of public life."

He closes with "my earnest prayer that God would have you and the State over which you preside in His holy keeping."[1]

To the routine duties of Col. Humphreys' position, which included inspection and report upon supplies of various kinds, inspection of quarters and army posts, there were now added many details incident to the official conclusion of the war, and final reports and accounts to be rendered to Congress. His correspondence shows that various officials reported directly to him, and that many of

[1] See summary of letter in Irving's *Washington*, pp. 427–430, iv.

the exchanges were effected by him. His advice is asked upon various matters of military discipline. In July, Washington accompanied by Gov. Clinton took an extensive tour through the northern and western sections where the roads were hardly better than Indian trails.

The beauty of woods, mountain and valley, lake and river, was the same as now but the whole region was almost untouched by the hand of man. It is probable that Col. Humphreys was one of the party. Washington returned to camp after a journey of more than seven hundred and fifty miles, principally on horseback. In a letter to the Marquis de Chastellux he expresses his admiration of the grandeur of the scenery he had viewed, and "the goodness of that Providence which has dealt its favours to us with so profuse a hand." He determined not "to rest contented till I have explored the western country and traversed those lines," or a great part of them, "which have given bounds to a new Empire."

After his return to camp on August 5, he went to spend some weeks at Princeton where the Congress was then sitting. It had been driven from Philadelphia by a mutiny among the new recruits of the Pennsylvania militia, eighty of whom marched to Philadelphia from Lancaster. They were joined by two hundred men from the city barracks and then besieged the State House, where Congress was assembled. Not only the dignity of Congress but the safety of its members caused the change in the place of meeting, although the mutiny was soon quelled by the State authorities. Washington's presence in Princeton was of great value to the Congress, which was engaged in considering a peace establishment. He made his headquarters at Rocky Hill on the Millstone River four miles from Princeton. Here with Lady Washington and his staff he spent two months. He was in frequent communication with Congress upon important matters of

public policy, especially the disposition of public lands, the proper treatment of the Indians and the settlement of the West. His ideas were not then fully appreciated and acted upon. "Unluckily he was," says a recent biographer, "so far ahead, both in knowledge and perception, of the body with which he dealt that he could get little or nothing done."[1]

Upon his return to Newburgh he arranged all his papers and accounts preparatory to submitting them to Congress. He maintained in the small force then in camp discipline and cheerfulness, and patiently awaited the arrival of the messenger with the tidings of the signing of the definitive treaty of peace.

Finally in October the official notice of the signing of the definitive treaty of peace at Paris on September 3 was received by Congress. On announcement of this fact there was renewed rejoicing everywhere. Congress issued a proclamation on October 18, discharging from further service all officers and men who had been furloughed, providing for the final discharge of all who had enlisted for the war on November 3, and retaining a small force of those who had enlisted for a definite time until a peace establishment should be organized. In the General Orders for November 2, the Commander-in-Chief recites the terms of the proclamation, and says it only remains for him to address himself "for the last time, to the armies of the United States, however widely dispersed the individuals who compose them may be, and to bid them an affectionate and long farewell." In his direct and simple style he proceeds to review the Revolution, to mention the glorious prospects before the country, urge them to attachment to the Union, to be "not less virtuous and useful citizens than they had been victorious as soldiers." He expresses his invariable attachment and

[1] Henry Cabot Lodge's *Washington*, American Statesmen Series, p. 336.

friendship to all members of the army, and concludes with the hope that ample justice may be done them, here, "and may the choicest of Heaven's favours both here and there attend those who under the Divine auspices have secured innumerable blessings for others."

Dr. Thatcher describing the scene, when these final orders were read, says that the advice of their beloved commander and the resolve of Congress as to back pay kept the soldiers from discontent and tumult and "no description would be adequate to the painful circumstances of the parting scene."[1]

Our poet soldier has given in his "Happiness of America" this vivid picture of that day of parting:

The song begins where all our bliss began
What time th' Almighty check'd the wrath of man,
Distill'd, in bleeding wounds, the balm of peace,
And bade the rage of mortal discord cease.
Then foes, grown friends, from toils of slaughter breath'd,
Then war-worn troops their blood-stained weapons sheath'd;
Then our great Chief to Vernon's shades withdrew,
And thus, to parting hosts, pronounc'd adieu:

"Farewell to public care, to public life;
Now peace invites me from the deathful strife.
And oh my country, may'st thou ne'er forget
Thy bands victorious, and thy honest debt!
If aught which proves to me thy freedom dear,
Gives me a claim to speak, thy sons shall hear:
On them I call—Compatriots dear and brave,
Deep in your breasts these warning truths engrave;
To guard your sacred rights—be just! be wise!
Thence flow your blessings, there your glory lies,

[1] Dr. Thatcher's *Military Journal*, p. 421, as quoted on p. 438 of Irving's *Washington*, iv.

Beware the feud whence civil war proceeds;
Fly mean suspicions; spurn inglorious deeds;
Shun fell corruption's pestilential breath,
To states the cause, and harbinger of death.

"Fly dissipation, in whose vortex whirl'd,
Sink the proud nations of the elder world.
Avoid the hidden snares that pleasure spreads,
To seize and chain you in her silken threads;
Let not the lust of gold nor pow'r enthrall;
Nor list the wild ambitions frantic call.
Stop, stop your ears to discord's curst alarms,
Which, rousing, drive a mad'ning world to arms;
But learn from others' woes, sweet peace to prize,
To know your bliss, and where your treasure lies—
Within the compass of your little farms,
Lodg'd in your breasts, or folded in your arms;
Blest in your clime, beyond all nations blest,
Whom oceans guard, and boundless wilds invest.

"Nor yet neglect the native force which grows,
Your shield from insult, and your wall from foes;
But early train your youth, by mimic fights,
To stand the guardians of their country's rights.

"By honour rul'd, with honesty your guide,
Be that your bulwark, and be this your pride;
Increase the fed'ral ties; support the laws;
Guard public faith; revere religion's cause.
Thus rise to greatness—by experience find,
Who live the best, are greatest of mankind

"And ye, my faithful friends, (for thus I name
My fellow lab'rers in the field of fame)
Ye, who for freedom nobly shed your blood,
Dy'd ev'ry plain, and purpled ev'ry flood,
From Georgia's stream to walls of proud Quebec;

To these stern toils the peaceful scene succeeds,
The eyes of nations watch your future deeds;
Go, act as citizens, in life's retreat,
Your parts as well, and make your fame complete:
'Tis ours for ever, from this hour to part,
Accept th' effusions of a grateful heart!
Where'er you go, may milder fates pursue,
Receive my warmest thanks, my last adieu."

The *HERO* spoke—an awful pause ensu'd;
Each eye was red, each face with tears bedew'd;
As if the pulse of life suspended stood,
An unknown horror chill'd the curdling blood:
Their arms were lock'd; their cheeks irriguous met,
By thy soft trickling dews, affection! wet.
Words past all utt'rance mock'd the idle tongue,
While petr fied in final gaze they clung.

The bands retiring, sought their ancient farms,
With laurels crown'd—receiv d with open arms.
Now citizens, they form'd no sep'rate class,
But spread, commixing, through the gen'ral mass;
Congenial metals, thus, by chymic flame,
Dissolve, assimilate, and grow the same.

Swords turn'd to shares, and war to rural toil,
The men who sav'd, now cultivate the soil.
In no heroic age, since time began,
Appear'd so great the majesty of man.[1]

All that remained now to be done before the great Commander could render up his trust and sheath the sword was the formal transfer of the city of New York to the authorities of the United States. There were numerous delays of this ceremony as there was a large amount of personal property to be transported to the Provinces, and

[1] Humphreys' *Miscellaneous Works*, edition of 1804, pp. 27–29.

many loyalists who intended there to find new homes under the flag for which they had dared and suffered so much left the city under the protection of the ships of Sir Guy Carleton's squadron. It was not until November 21 that the outposts at King's Bridge and McGowan's Pass, with the posts at the eastern end of Long Island, were given up and the troops of the British army withdrawn.

With his staff and an escort Washington left his headquarters at Newburgh and took up his station in Harlem, in readiness to march into the city upon the day appointed, November 25.

Gov. Clinton and his staff, with the members of the State Council of New York, with whom he had been in conference at East Chester; Gen. Knox with his artillery corps from West Point; and the remainder of the Continental army, joined him there.

It was arranged that the American authorities should take possession at noon on November 25. Gen. Knox in command of the troops remaining in the army reached early on that day, which was clear and frosty, the Bowery Lane, and halted at the junction with the present Third Avenue. At one o'clock the British departed from posts in that locality, and took up their line of march for the barges at Whitehall, which were to convey them to the transports. Gen. Knox's army was on the march very soon after, and amid the cheers of the people, the waving of flags and handkerchiefs, it entered the city from Bowery Lane by way of Chatham Street. A corps of dragoons led the van, and was followed by a guard of light infantry, a corps of artillery, a battalion of Massachusetts troops and the rear guard. The army reached across the Commons and down Broadway to Fort George, which they entered before three o'clock. The great British standard was then replaced on the flagstaff by the American flag, the visible sign and token that independence had been

achieved, and the last stronghold of Great Britain on the Atlantic seaboard was now in possession of the lawful authorities of the United States of America, which may God long preserve and bless. Soon the stars and stripes were seen floating from the liberty pole on Bowling Green, which stood upon the site of the statue of King George. At a later hour Gen. Washington made his triumphal entry into the city, escorted by the West Chester Guard under Capt. Delavan, and with his suite, and was accompanied by the Governor and his staff. They were followed by the Hon. Pierre Van Cortland of Croton, the Lieutenant-Governor, and the members of the Council, four abreast; the speaker of the Assembly and citizens on foot, eight abreast. The enthusiasm was great as the procession slowly made its way to the tavern of Samuel Fraunces on Broad Street, where apartments had been prepared for the General and his staff. In the evening there were salvos of artillery, fireworks, and bon-fires all over the city. Gov. Clinton gave to Washington and his officers an elaborate dinner at Fraunces' Tavern, and on the following Monday there was another public dinner in honour of the French Ambassador, the Chevalier de Luzerne, which was attended by Washington, several generals, officials of the State of New York, and more than one hundred other gentlemen.

A touching ceremony remained to be performed before Washington could seek his home, and in peace and quiet resume the life of a Virginia planter and gentleman; and that was to take leave of the officers of the army before they went to their homes to mingle again with their fellow citizens and take up once more the occupations of peace. As Washington entered the room all rose; advancing to the upper end he stood by a table, and filling for himself a glass of wine, and holding it up, in his clear voice said with deep emotion: "With a heart full of love and grati-

Fraunce's Tavern, as Restored by the Sons of the Revolution

tude I now take leave of you, most devoutly wishing that your latest days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honourable." In a sympathetic silence the toast was drunk by those present. He then said: "I cannot come to each of you to take my leave, but shall be obliged if each will come and take me by the hand." Gen. Knox, who was standing close to him, turned with tear-stained face, put out his hand which Washington took with his right hand, while with the other he embraced and kissed him. In the same manner he greeted each officer as he approached. The affecting scene was finally over, and in silence save for the half subdued sobs, all accompanied him to the barge in waiting at the foot of Whitehall Street. A corps of light infantry served as escort as slowly with his staff and a large throng of people he walked to the landing place and entered the barge. No cheers rent the air, but the respectful quiet demeanour of all showed the gratitude they felt to him who had grown old and careworn in the service, as he waved with his hat a farewell salute to which they responded. His journey through New Jersey had another aspect, for all hailed him as the conquering hero. He was met by the local militia, martial music was in the air, the leading citizens in every town escorted him through its limits, banquets were prepared for him, and from the Legislatures of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland, from the University of Pennsylvania and the American Philosophical Society he received formal addresses to which he made appropriate replies. He remained in Philadelphia for a few days, where he filed with the Comptroller his account of expenditures during the war. The total amount was for the modest sum of fourteen thousand, four hundred and seventy-nine pounds, eighteen shillings, nine and three quarters pence, which at the present rate would equal nearly seventy-five thousand dollars. The

principal items were for secret intelligence, reconnoitring and travelling; the other miscellaneous expenses were put together as "miscellaneous." It is to be remembered in these days of desire to profit from the Government, that Washington did not accept any salary or allowance for his services. The accounts were made out in his own handwriting, and were accompanied by the vouchers for each item of expenditure. The General and Lady Washington reached Annapolis where Congress was sitting, on December 19. To a message sent by the General, requesting to know when it would be the pleasure of Congress to receive him that he might resign to it his commission as Commander-in-Chief, the answer was returned appointing Tuesday, December 23, at noon, in the presence of such persons as were specially entitled to witness the ceremony. Congress was sitting in the State House, a handsome stone building erected eleven years before. The room occupied was the Senate Chamber, which had several large windows, and a gallery in the rear. To this gallery were admitted Lady Washington and other ladies, many of them the wives and daughters of members of Congress, or those connected with the State government. Upon the floor were the members from nine States, the Governor of Maryland, the Hon. William Paca and other dignitaries of Maryland. The Congress was seated in the chairs they usually occupied and were covered; all others stood. At a long table was seated the President, the Hon. Thomas Mifflin, sometime one of Washington's aides, and at the opposite side of the table was Mr. Thomson, the Secretary of Congress. Dressed simply in his buff and blue uniform, and accompanied by the same two aides whom he had singled out as we have seen after the siege of Yorktown, for especial honour, Col. Humphreys and Col. Tilghman, Gen. Washington entered the Chamber as the bells of the city struck noon.

Brig. Gen. James Clinton | Brig. Gen. Van Cortlandt | Maj. Gen. Israel Putnam | George Washington | Maj. Gen. Henry Knox | Maj. Gen. Benj. Lincoln | Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Greene | Col. John Lamb | Col. Humphreys | Maj. Gen. Baron Von Steuben

Washington's Farewell to his Officers at Fraunce's Tavern

The Secretary announced that the "Commander-in-Chief was in attendance to make a communication to the United States in Congress assembled." Gen. Mifflin arose and said, "The United States in Congress assembled was ready to receive his communication." Washington then stepped forward from the chair to which he had been escorted and behind which stood Col. Humphreys and Col. Tilghman, and holding in his hand the Commission he had received at Philadelphia in June, 1775, delivered in a low but distinct voice an address. In conclusion he said:

I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last act of my official life by commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them in His holy keeping. Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action and bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body, under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my Commission and take my leave of all the employments of public life.

He then placed the commission in President Mifflin's hands, and remained standing while General Mifflin made a graceful and grateful response. He referred to the unselfish nature of the task done by Washington when called by his country "to defend its invaded rights." He acknowledged the wisdom and fortitude of the Commander "during a perilous and doubtful war." "After having defended the standard of liberty in this new world you retire from the great theatre of action with the blessings of your fellow citizens; but the glory of your virtue will not terminate with your military command, it will continue to animate remotest ages."

Those present were visibly affected. Washington and President Mifflin bowed profoundly to each other, and the President then resumed his chair.

General Washington, followed by his two aides, Humphreys and Tilghman, then retired. The audience left the Chamber, and Congress resumed its ordinary deliberations.

Surgeon J. E. B. Finley, of the Massachusetts Line, happening to be at Philadelphia, wrote in a letter as yet unpublished, of December 13, 1783: "Gen. Washington is here . . . he is almost adored, cannon firing, bells ringing . . . entertain'd with feasts, balls and concerts . . . crowds follow him as he walks the streets. . . . I wonder if any British General will be received in like manner in England."

These were the final scenes in a contest which, commencing nearly twenty years before, had demanded the young manhood and the treasure of the country, and which had now, through the goodness of God, been crowned with honour and success. Among the young men who had so eagerly responded to the call of their country, none had obeyed that call with greater patriotism, or had devoted greater talents to it than David Humphreys, whose military career, but not whose services to his country, ended as he stepped out with his General on that bright December morning from the Senate Chamber at Annapolis.

Washington Resigning his Commission at Annapolis
Showing Colonel Humphreys Standing next to Washington
Original, by Colonel Trumbull, in the Rotunda of the Capitol at Washington

CHAPTER XV

Beginnings of Diplomatic Career

Humphreys Accompanies Washington to Mount Vernon—Christmas Festivities—The Commerce of a New Nation—Humphreys' Letter to Washington with regard to his New Employment—Washington's Reply—Washington's Letter to President of Congress—He Requests the Secretaryship for Foreign Affairs for Humphreys—The Request Ignored—John Jay Appointed—Letter of Humphreys to President of Congress—Appointment of Committee on Foreign Commercial Treaties—Appointment of Humphreys as Secretary—Official Letter from President of Congress—Formal Letter of Acceptance from Humphreys—His Letter to Washington—Visit of Jefferson to Yale—Humphreys and Washington's Epaulets—Departure of Humphreys for Paris—His Farewell Letter to Washington—His Epistle to Dwight.

WHEN the significant ceremonial recorded in the last chapter was ended, the General and Lady Washington proceeded to Mount Vernon. They were accompanied by Col. Humphreys, Col. Smith, and either Col. Tilghman or Major Walker. Gov. Paca and several of his staff escorted them as far as the South River. After spending the night at Queen Anne the party arrived at Alexandria, nine miles from their home, in time for dinner on the following day. When late on the afternoon of Christmas Eve they reached the gates of Mount Vernon, the aged "Bishop" was there to welcome them, leaning upon his staff, and his pretty daughter ready "to make her courtesy to Madam"; nearby were grouped the ser-

vants whose smiles, displaying their white teeth, showed a joy they could not put into words.

Our soldier says:

> Returned from War, I saw them round him press
> And all their speechless glee by artless signs express.[1]

The house was filled with friends who warmly welcomed them. During the night, it is said, there was kept up an incessant firing of guns and pistols to express their delight that the Master had returned. Fiddles and banjos in lively melodies were heard until a late hour in the negro-quarters, and many an impromptu dance by the dusky belles and beaux made the Christmas eve a happy one.

A guest from Fredericksburg, herself young and attractive, writes:

> I must tell you what a charming day I spent at Mount Vernon with Mama and Sally. The Gen'l and Madame came home on Christmas Eve, and such a racket the Servants made, for they were glad of their coming! Three handsome young Officers came with them. All Christmas afternoon people came to pay their Respects and Duty, among them were stately Dames and gay young Women. The Gen'l seemed very happy, and Mistress Washington was from Daybrake making everything as agreeable as possible for Everybody.[2]

Compared with the rigours and deprivations of army life the diversions, good cheer and cordiality, gaiety and mirth, the pleasant company and brilliant conversation were doubly agreeable to our soldier and to all who were privileged to see the relaxation and relief of General Washington in his own home.

[1] "The Death of Washington," in the Colonel Humphrey *Works*, edition of 1804, lines 629, 630.

[2] Miss Wharton's *Martha Washington*, p. 153.

With the end of the war the claims of commerce called for consideration. The new nation had still to demonstrate its ability to cope successfully with other nations in the arts of peace. Its commerce had been almost entirely controlled by the parent country. Its manufactures few, the rewards of mechanical industry were wanting, for there had been no incentive to exertion in that direction, and agriculture was still its chief resource. There were commodities which could profitably be exchanged with foreign countries. While the Articles of Confederation did not confer upon Congress any authority over the commerce of the several States, yet under them it was possible to negotiate commercial treaties with other powers, provided a majority of the States consented. It was seen that the valuable West Indian trade which had been the source of a large revenue in Colonial days would now be under vexatious restrictions. It was the part of wisdom to seek alliances and find markets for surplus products. Spain, with the command of the Mississippi, opposed any profitable traffic with New Orleans or extension of trade westward. England, by her garrisons on the Great Lakes, barred any venture in the north-west. Enterprising merchants had engaged in the Mediterranean trade, but the grasping piratical cruisers of the Barbary States who seized the vessels of all powers, who would pay them large tribute, made that too hazardous. The maritime powers of Europe had oppressive and costly port regulations. It was thought that a strict regulation of all vessels entering American ports, and defining what goods could be brought in, and what excluded, might induce England to frame a more liberal navigation act and allow the United States to share in the trade of which she had a monopoly. For this purpose a few of the wiser statesmen endeavoured to have the several States vest in the United States for fifteen years the regulation of all commerce.

In the meantime it was essential to the welfare of the nation that treaties of commerce should be made with various European nations, and equal privileges granted them. The subject was fully discussed in Congress, and it was resolved that a commission should be sent to Europe to lay before the authorities of the Continent the propositions for reciprocal advantages.

While these deliberations were in progress, Col. Humphreys, who remained at Mount Vernon only through the Christmas holidays, was considering an offer of employment in the public service, made to him by President Mifflin, when Gen. Washington resigned his commission.

He accordingly wrote to Gen. Washington the following letter:

Jan'y 6th, 1784.

My dear General:—

After your public Audience was concluded on the 23d of Decr the President of Congress took me aside, and requested, "if anything should occur to me in consequence of what had just been suggested in favor of the Gentlemen of Washington's family who had continued with him to that moment, that I would communicate it to him in a letter, and further observed, that he should take great pleasure in laying it immediately before Congress."

I have hesitated in deciding what was the best mode of making known my sentiments and wishes, for it is not a pleasing task to speak or write much respecting myself, and altho' my early studies, my opportunities of gaining experience from your example, my present habits and time of life, with some other circumstances, would have strongly inclined me to continue in some department of the public employment; yet I should not have presumed to offer my services, but for the generous encouragement which has been proffered in consequence of your recommendations. My sense of that honorable notice and my readiness to obey the commands of Congress I have now determined to signify in a concise and

respectful manner to them. I do not know, however, whether it might not appear to assuming in me, to mention in that communication any particular department in which I could wish to serve the Public—but as Congress may in a short time have in their gift one or other of the following Appointments, viz; the office of Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the command of a Regiment, in case of a Peace establishment, or the nomination of a Secretary to one of their Commissions abroad;—if there should be no impropriety in your further interposition, and if the performance of the duties of either of these Offices should be deemed within the compass of my abilities a suggestion of the kind (founded on the proferred encouragement of Congress) addressed even in your private character, to the President, would be of sufficient avail.

If also you could take the trouble of inclosing the copy of such a Letter to me, as a perpetual Memorial of your friendship and approbation, it would afford a gratification beyond which my wishes do not extend.

Perhaps I ask too much but as your goodness has prompted, your indulgence will pardon the boldness of the request and suppress whatever is improper in it.

In the meantime permit me to return my best thanks for your obliging offer of being useful to me in future life as well as for your kindness on every former occasion; and to testify with how great veneration and attachment, I have the honor to be,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful friend and most humble
Obed. humble servant,
D. Humphreys.

His Ex'cy Gen. Washington.

Washington at once sent this cordial reply:

My dear Humphrys:

I have been favored with your Letter of the 6th. Be assured that there are few things which would give me more pleasure than opportunities of evincing to you the sincerity

of my friendship and disposition to render you services at any time when it may be in my power.

Altho' all recommendations from me to Congress must be considered as coming from a private character, yet I enter very cheerfully into your views; and as far as my suggesting of them to that honorable body, accompanied by a testimonial of your competency to the execution of the duties of either of the offices in contemplation, will go, you have them freely; and the enclosed letter, which is a copy of the one I have written to Congress on the occasion, will be an evidence of my good wishes whatever may be the success.

I cannot take my leave of you without offering those acknowledgements of your long and zealous services to the public which your merits justly entitle you to, and which a grateful heart should not withhold, and I feel very sensibly the obligations I am personally under to you, for the aid I have derived from your abilities, for the cheerful assistance you have afforded me upon interesting occasions, and for the attachment you have always manifested towards me.

I shall hold in pleasing remembrance the friendship and intimacy which have subsisted between us, and shall neglect no opportunity on my part to cultivate and improve them, being with unfeigned esteem and regard, my Dr Humphrys,

yr most affecte friend
& Obed. Servant

Go Washington.[1]

Mount Vernon,
14 Jany, 1784.

The application to the President of Congress referred to by Gen. Washington in the same letter is as follows:

Mount Vernon, Jan. 14, 1784.

Sir:

The Goodness of Congress, in the assurances, they were pleased to give me, of charging themselves with the interests of those Confidential Officers who have attended me to the resignation of my public employments;—and the request of

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C.

your Excellency to Colonel Humphreys (after I had been honoured with my public audience) that, if anything should occur to him in consequence of what had just been suggested that he would communicate it to you in a letter; induce me to take the liberty of bringing the wishes of that officer before Congress.

Having devoted the last seven or eight years to the service of his Country, he is desirous of continuing in the walk of public life, although he is ignorant—as I also am—of the offices which Congress have to bestow and may think him competent to.

Two openings, however, seem likely, either of which I am persuaded he would fill with as much advantage to the public, as reputation to himself.

The one is a Regiment in case a Continental peace establishment should be resolved on; the other Official Secretary to an Embassy abroad if new appointments should be made or a vacancy happen in the old ones.—

There is a third office which I barely hint at, with all possible deference, and with a diffidence which proceeds from a doubt of the propriety of my suggesting it, than from any question which arises in my mind of his competency to the duties; and that is Secretary of Foreign Affairs, if Congress should think it expedient to make another appointment; and should find all those requisites in him, which are necessary to constitute a minister for that department—For his ability, integrity, punctuality and sobriety I can fully answer.—

If I have gone too far, Congress will please to excuse it, and attribute the error to my wishes to serve a worthy character.—

With great respect,

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your Excell'y Most Obed't and Hble Servant,

G° Washington.

His Excell'y

The Presid of Congress.[1]

The reason why Washington singled out the Secretaryship for Foreign Affairs is that at that time, January, 1784, that post was vacant. Mr. Livingston's resignation had been

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C.

officially accepted on June the 4th, of the previous year, and Mr. John Jay was not appointed till the 7th of May, 1784.

This letter is endorsed, "Letter 14 January, 1784, General Washington in favour of Col. Humphreys, Rec'd Jan. 17." It is strange to us of this generation to find what little heed was paid by Congress to a recommendation by Washington in his day. We are all aware of the jealousies and bickerings among the principal men of our country immediately after the cessation of the war, and of the veiled disrespect with which General Washington was treated. Yet one is hardly prepared to find an official communication from Washington to the President of Congress so deliberately ignored as was this letter of January 14, 1784.

In it Washington pointedly asks Congress to appoint Colonel Humphreys Secretary of Foreign Affairs. The influence at work in Congress was such that it was thought best to conciliate the friends of Mr. Jay rather than grant the only request made by Washington on behalf of any of his intimate friends. It is noteworthy that this request to Congress is the only one General Washington ever made on behalf of his military family, and certainly the coolness with which it was treated did not encourage him to repeat the experiment.

On the other hand we see what affection General Washington had for Col. Humphreys, what a high opinion he had of his abilities. The place of Secretary for Foreign Affairs is the most important post which a new nation just emerging from a successful revolutionary war can offer to its servants. Next in position to that of Chief Magistrate, there is no other post of such vital importance. In war time the commander-in-chief of the armies is the second post of importance within a nation's gift. The war concluded, the honour and rank devolves on the man who directs the relations of the new nation with other nations. That Humphreys should have been singled

out for this honour shows in the most unmistakable manner the opinion he had of the high ability of Humphreys. That the Colonel would have been successful as Secretary for Foreign Affairs is abundantly clear to all who have read his dispatches to Washington and to the State Department while at Madrid and Lisbon.

Colonel Humphreys sent to President Mifflin on January 26, 1784, this brief letter:

SIR:

Your Excellence will recollect, at my departure from Annapolis, that you had the goodness to offer me the liberty of addressing a line to you, in your public character, if anything should occur in consequence of the notice which had then been taken of the confidential Officers who had been attached to the person of the Commander-in-Chief. Of this indulgence I now wish to avail myself, and through Your Excellency to make known to the United States in Congress all my gratitude for the flattering marks of distinction they have more than once been pleased to confer upon me; to inform them that I shall hold myself prepared to obey their future Orders; and to assure them that it will be my unremitting study in every situation of life not to render myself unworthy of such distinguished *tokens* of the sovereign approbation. As my illustrious friend and patron, General Washington, writes your Excellency on my subject, his letter will supersede the necessity of my entering into any detail.—Whatever commands Congress may think proper to honour me with, being addressed to me at New Haven, by the Post—or other direct conveyance, will find me at any intermediate period between the present and the month of May next.

With the most perfect respect, I have the honour to be,
Your Excellency's Most Obedient &
Very humble Servant,
D. HUMPHREYS—

His Excellency, THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.[1]

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C.

Among other positions that might have fallen to Humphreys was the Secretaryship of the Continental Congress. The following letter bears upon this point:

New Haven, Feby. 29th, 1784.

My dear Sir:

The letter you did me the honour of addressing to me by Mr. Carleton has just now reached me at this place. I am much indebted to you for your obliging communication, and regret extremely my not having received it in Philadelphia; as I should (agreeably to your advice) have remained there until I had learned the result: indeed had I known the appointment would have taken place so soon, I should have waited the event at Annapolis, or at least have explained my ideas more fully to you and some of my friends in Congress.

I believe I mentioned to you, there were two reasons which would induce me to be satisfied for the present with the office in contemplation, the first was, the occasion it offered of enlarging the sphere of my political knowledge; the second, that by being present, it afforded an opportunity to avail one's self of whatever advantageous circumstance might present itself hereafter. But the decision on this point so far as it can respect myself having been made before this time, nothing is necessary to be observed on the subject, except that, until, I hear further concerning it, I shall continue to decline entering into any private business or other employment, in expectation there may be occasion for my services in this or some other public department.

The last time I saw the President of Congress, he informed me in confidence, that it was not probable (from what he had heard Mr. Thomson say), the office of Secretary of Congress would become vacant in the spring. I mention this as a circumstance which I imagine not very likely to occur, of which however you will be better acquainted, and by which (in case it should take place) you may possibly be enabled to profit your friend.

There is nothing worth the trouble of communicating from

this part of the continent, except that the good sense of the people appears to be on the point of prevailing over the Artifice, prejudice and ignorance which had threatened to involve us in such serious evils. It is the concurring opinion of all the well-informed with whom I have been conversant, that notwithstanding the violent opposition which has been made against the measures of Congress, there will be a compliance with their late Requisitions at the meeting of the Legislature in May next.

I shall be happy in hearing sometimes how affairs proceed in your political world, and in seizing every occasion to demonstrate with what perfect affection and respect

I have the honor to be
My Dear Sir
Your most obedt. humble servant,
D. Humphreys.

General Hand.

The friends of Col. Humphreys in Congress had agreed that the secretaryship of a foreign commission would be a suitable appointment, but the slow action of the States in fully empowering Congress to regulate commerce caused much delay. Frequent debates were held on the subject and scope of the commission. The anxiety of the Colonel at the slow progress of Congress to a decision is shown in a letter written from New Haven on April 2, 1784, to President Mifflin. He alludes to his letter of January 26, and says that he proposes remaining in New Haven until the beginning of May "to receive the orders of Congress." As he had heard that Congress would adjourn at the close of the month he naturally wished to know their pleasure respecting his future services.

He apologizes for introducing "the subject of a private individual among the important concerns of a nation," and would not, were it not "for the irksome and disagreeable predicament" in which he would be placed should a

long recess intervene, as he could not engage in "private, in expectation of public employment."

At length on May 7, a Commission was appointed to negotiate treaties of amity and commerce with the powers of Europe. Two members were already in Europe, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, and the honourable John Adams, United States Agent at The Hague. The third member was the honourable Thomas Jefferson, then a member of Congress.

In his *Autobiography* Governor Jefferson says: "The other states to which treaties were to be proposed were England, Hamburg, Saxony, Prussia, Denmark, Russia, Austria, Venice, Rome, Naples, Tuscany, Sardinia, Genoa, Spain, Portugal, the Porte, Algiers, Tripoli, Tunis and Morocco."[1]

Treaties were already in operation with France, the Netherlands and Sweden. On his acceptance of his post Governor Jefferson went on May 11 to Philadelphia, where he met Col. Humphreys, who the next day, May 12, was appointed Secretary to the Commission, at a salary of three thousand dollars, and arranged the preliminaries of their journey to Paris, from which city the negotiations were to be carried on.

Although the official communication is dated May 17, 1784, yet it is evident that the appointment had been decided on before that date, from the fact that a friend, whom we do not now know, wrote the Colonel on May 12, informing him of his appointment. To this friend, Humphreys replied as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, May 19, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received with the greatest satisfaction your obliging Letter of the 12th. I feel myself deeply impressed with the

[1] *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, i., p. 60. By H. A. Washington. New York: John C. Riker, 1853.

honour Congress have done me in the appointment you had the goodness to communicate, but must withhold my grateful acknowledgement to them until I receive official advice of it.

I pray you will be persuaded, my dear friend, that no business however weighty or trifling or any circumstance will ever obliterate the remembrance of your friendship—on my part I shall ever be happy in having frequent occasions to demonstrate the sincerity of my professions, and to assure you that

I am, my dear Sir, with Every friendly Sentiment,

Your most obedt. Servt.

D. Humphreys.

P. S. I enclose you the most interesting part of the Proceedings of the General Meeting of the Cincinnati.

Endorsed:—Letter from Col. D. Humphreys.
19th May 1784.[1]

Colonel David Humphrey,

Annapolis, May 17, 1784.

Sir:

It is with great pleasure I inform you Congress have elected you the Secretary to the Commission for negotiating Treaties of Commerce with foreign Powers, and have referred to the Superintendent of Finance to take Order, a motion of Colonel Spaights, that one Quarter's Salary should be immediately advanced to you, and that a provision should be made in Europe for the payment of a second Quarter at the expiration of the first Quarter.

I have the honor to be with every sentiment of respect,

Sir, Your Obedient Servant,

Thomas Mifflin.

His acceptance was written from New York on May 24, 1784.

[1] Pennsylvania Historical Society.

New York, May 24, 1784.

Sir:

Having this moment had the honor to receive Your Excellency's letter of the 17th enclosing my official appointment as Secretary to the Commission for negociating Treaties of Commerce with foreign Powers, I make no delay in signifying my acceptance and expressing my grateful acknowledgements of the honor which has been conferred upon me. Penetrated with such sensations for the confidence which has been reposed in me I make it my earnest request that the United States in Congress may be assurred it will be the first object of my heart to render myself more worthy of it. Requesting your acceptance of my best thanks for the polite attention exhibited in the official communications I have the honor to remain with Sentiments of the most perfect consideration and respect, Sir,

Your Excellency's

Most Obed. & Most Devoted Servt.

D. Humphreys.

His Excellency, The President of Congress.

From Philadelphia, where he had been in attendance at the first general meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati, he wrote on May 18, to General Washington:

Philadelphia, May 18th, 1784.

My dear General:—

A few hours after your departure I received a private communication from a friend in Congress informing me of my appointment as Secretary to the Commissioners for forming Commercial treaties in Europe—tho' pleased with the information I considered myself as unfortunate in not having rec'd the Letter while your Excellency remained in Town—because I wished to avail myself of Letters of introduction or recommendation, to some of your acquaintances & Doc'tr Franklin, the Count D'Estaing and such other Characters in England, or France, as you might think proper. Perhaps a general Certificate of my Services and character, which I have never

before solicited, because I did not wish to give unnecessary trouble, would be of infinite consequence on some future occasion; and I trust you are persuaded my dear Sir, that I should not make an indiscreet or improper use of it—Nor must you think it less than the most serious truth that in my opinion, nothing which I can possibly carry from this Continent will be of equal importance to my reputation, as to have it known I have been Aid de Camp to and the friend of Gen. Washington.

Perhaps, it is not yet too late; for I cannot but hope, that any Papers you might be pleased to address to me, or to Mr. Jefferson for me at Boston, would reach that place before our embarkation which will not be until between the 10th & 20th June next.

I should not have presumed to ask these favors but for the former proofs I have had of your goodness of which I shall never be unmindful in whatever climate or circumstance I may happen to be placed.

Wishing Mrs. Washington & your Connections every possible felicity, I beg to add, that tho' others might be more lavish in their professions, none can ever be more sincere in their feelings of veneration, friendship & respect for you than

My dear General

Your very affectionate & most humble Servant

D. Humphreys

His Excellency
Gen. Washington.

P. S. If I could have but a single line to show that you presented me with the golden eagle it would be infinitely pleasing & useful—Whether I should hear from you or not, I shall not fail to address your Excellency from the other side of the water.

Washington's reply is as follows:

My Dr Humphreys:

I very sincerely congratulate you on your late appointment.

It is honorable, and I dare say must be agreeable. I did not hear of it until I arrived at Annapolis, where I remained but one day, and that occasioned by the detention of my carriage and horses on the Eastern Shore. General Knox not reaching that place before I left it, your letter of the 18th only got to my hands on Sunday last by the Post.

I now send you, under flying seals, letters to Mr. Jefferson, Dr. Franklin, and Count de Estaing. The letter to the Chevalier Chastellux also mentions you and your appointment. My former correspondence with England ceased at the commencement of hostilities, and I have opened no new one since; but I enclose you a letter for Sir Edwd. Newenham,[1] of Ireland, from whom I have lately received several very polite letters, and a pressing invitation to correspond with him. He has been a warm friend to America during her whole struggle. He is a man of fortune, and of excellent character (as I am told), and may, if you should go to Ireland, be a valuable acquaintance.

It only remains for me now to wish you a pleasant passage, and that you may realize all the pleasure, which you must have in expectation. It cannot be necessary to add how happy I shall be at all times to hear from you. You will have it in your power to contribute much to my amusement and information, and as far as you can do the latter consistently with your duty and public trust I shall be obliged. Further I do not require; and even here, mark *private* what you think not altogether fit for the public ear, and it shall remain with me. Mrs. Washington adds her best wishes for you, and you may rest assured that few friendships are warmer, or professions more sincere than mine for you.

Adieu, &c., &c.

Mount Vernon, 2d June, 1784.

[1] The Sir Edward Newenham alluded to by Washington belonged to the family of the Newenhams of Coolmore. Edward Newenham was born November 5, 1734, and died in 1814. He was M. P. for Dublin in the Irish Parliament and was knighted November 10, 1764.

In the MSS. Department of the Congressional Library, Washington, there are five letters from Washington to Sir Edward bearing date of July 29, 1789; January 15, 1790; February 6, 1791; and September 5, 1791.

Mount Vernon 2d. June 1784.

Dear Sir;

Congress having been pleased to appoint Col.o Humphrys Secretary to the Commissioners, for forming Commercial Treaties in Europe; I take the liberty of introducing him to you. —

This Gentleman was several years in my family as an Aid de Camp. — His zeal in the cause of his Country, his good sense, prudence, and attachment to me, rendered him dear to me; and I persuade myself you will find no confidence misplaced. — He possesses an excellent heart, good natural & acquired abilities, and sterling integrity. — To which may be added sobriety, & an obliging disposition.

A full conviction of his possessing all these good qualities, makes me less scrupulous of recommending him to you.

Yr affectionate

patronage and friendship. — Heark
repeat to you the assurances of perfect
esteem, regard, & consideration, with
which I have the honor to be.

Dear Sir,

Y^r most Obed^t & very H^ble Ser^t

G. Washington

The Hon^ble
Doct^r Franklin

P.S. Just recollecting my old neighbour Colonel (who may now be Lord) Fairfax I give you a letter to him also, in case you should go to England.[1]

Among the letters he wrote for his former Aide is one to Dr. Franklin.

MOUNT VERNON 2d June 1784.

DEAR SIR;

Congress having been pleased to appoint Colo Humphrys Secretary to the Commissioners, for "forming commercial Treaties in Europe," I take the liberty of introducing him to you.—

This Gentleman was several years in my family as an Aid de Camp.—His zeal in the cause of his Country, his good sense, prudence, and attachment to me, rendered him dear to me; and I persuade myself you will find no confidence wch you may think proper to repose in him, misplaced.—He possesses an excellent heart, good natural & acquired abilities and sterling integrity.—to which may be added sobriety, & an obliging disposition.

A full conviction of his possessing all these good qualities, makes me less scrupulous of recommending him to your patronage and friendship.—He will repeat to you the assurances of perfect esteem, regard, & consideration, with which I have the honor to be,

Dear Sir,

Yr Most Obedt & very Hble Ser

Go WASHINGTON.

The Honble

DOCTR FRANKLIN.[2]

[1] MSS. Department, Congressional Library, Washington. The Lord Fairfax to whom Washington alludes was Thomas, 9th Lord. Born in 1762 and resided at Vaucluse, Fairfax County, Va. He married three times, his second wife being Louisa, a daughter of Warner Washington, and he died on the 21st of April, 1846.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 159.

He also mentioned with commendation Col. Humphreys in a letter to the Marquis de Chastellux.

It was the plan of Gov. Jefferson to make a careful observation of the commerce of the Middle and New England States before sailing. In the course of his tour he visited President Stiles at New Haven, and spent a day at Yale College. In his *Diary* President Stiles records that on June 8, 1784, "His Excellency, Gov. Jefferson visited me with a letter from Mr. Sherman at Congress. . . . He is on the way with Col. Humphreys, Sec'y to the Commission to Rh. Isld, Bo & Piscataqua to survey these Eastern States, & take passage at Bos for France."[1]

President Stiles devotes a large space to the details of his visit, giving notes of Mr. Jefferson's conversation with him. He concludes that the Governor is "a most ingenious Naturalist, also philosopher, a truly scientific and learned man & every way excellent."

It had been arranged that the Commissioner and Secretary should sail in a packet from New York unless there should be found at Boston or any eastern port a vessel sailing directly for France. But while Gov. Jefferson was still in the East on his return from Portsmouth to Boston, Mr. Nathaniel Tracy, a wealthy merchant, offered him a passage in one of his vessels in which he himself was expecting to go to England. He offered, if practicable, to land Mr. Jefferson on the coast of France. Mr. Jefferson accepted the courteous offer, and sent the Colonel word; "but," says the Colonel, "it was so late before I received it that I found it impossible to avail myself of the occasion."

Governor Jefferson, with Miss Jefferson, sailed from Boston in the *Ceres* on July 5, and arrived at Cowes, Isle of Wight, on July 26. On July 30 he embarked for Havre, which was reached on the 31st, and proceeded from there to Paris, where he arrived on August 8.

[1] President Stiles's *Diary*, iii., p. 124–125.

Col. Humphreys sailed from New York in the *Courier de l'Europe* on July 15.[1] Among his fellow passengers were the patriotic Pole, Gen. Kosciusko, whose services in the Revolution were of great value, and Col. Christian Senf who had served as Captain of the Engineers in the South Carolina regiments. Before sailing he sent a letter to Gen. Washington, explaining the reasons for the delay in sailing, already quoted, and continued:

Governor Jefferson acquainted me in one of his Letters from Boston, with his having rec'd a Packet from your Excellency addressed to me, but as he supposed it required a safe rather than a speedy conveyance, he chose to retain it until we should meet again—this my dear General, will account for my not having acknowledged the receipt of those favours which I find you had the friendship to grant in consequence of my Letter from Philadelphia.

Your Excellency knows the sincerity of my heart & warmth of my affections—tho' it will probably never be in my power to be useful or to render any compensation to so good a patron & friend; yet I trust it will always be mine to be faithful, to be grateful, & not to reflect disgrace upon that friendship from which I receive so much satisfaction glory & support. Having seen your Excellence reach the zenith of human greatness an object than which none was ever nearer my heart;—I should now be perfectly happy could I but see justice done to your character & actions—but there are many traits in the one & circumstances of the others which I fear will be lost. Indeed I find it is the opinion of many Gentlemen of candour & information that a true account of the war, at least of your military transactions with it cannot be given but by yourself or some of those who have been about your person. The fact is, in my opinion it is a most delicate subject highly interesting not only to your reputation, but to the good of mankind at large.

[1] "New York, July 19. The Packet l'Europe, Captain Cormick sailed on Saturday for l'Orient." *Connecticut Courant*, Tuesday, July 27, 1784, No. 1018.

I only take the liberty to suggest the subject for your consideration and will do myself the pleasure of writing more fully by another occasion—With my best respects to Mrs. Washington and family I have the honour to be

Your Exy's Most Obed & Hble Servant,

D. HUMPHREYS.

P. S. The closing & subscribing this Letter is one of the last acts which I shall do previous to my leaving the Continent—it brings to my mind a thousand tender ideas, & expands all my soul in the best wishes for your health & felicity—I expect momently the signal of departure & can say no more than adieu——[1]

He described the voyage in this poetic epistle to his friend, the Rev. Timothy Dwight:

AN

EPISTLE

TO

DR. DWIGHT

On board the Courier de L'Europe, July 30, 1784.

From the wide wat'ry waste, where nought but skies
And mingling waves salute the aching eyes;
Where the same moving circle bound she view,
And paints *with* vap'ry tints the billows blue;
To thee, my early friend! to thee, dear *Dwight!*
Fond recollection turns, while thus I write;
While I reflect, no change of time or place,
Th' impressions of our friendship can efface—
Nor peace or war—though chang'd for us the scene—
Though mountains rise, or oceans roll between—
Too deep that sacred passion was imprest
On my young heart—too deep it mark'd your breast—
Your breast, which asks the feelings of your friend,

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department.

What chance betides him, or what toils attend?
Then hear the muse, in sea-born numbers tell
In mind how cheerful, and in health how well;
And ev'n that muse will deign to let you know
What things concur to make and keep him so.—

We go, protected by supernal care,
With cloudless skies, and suns serenely fair;
While o'er th' unruffled main the gentle gale
Consenting breathes, and fills each swelling sail;
Conscious of safety in the self-same hand,
Which guides us on the ocean or on land.

Of thee, fair bark: the muse prophetic sings,
"*Europe's swift Messenger!* expand thy wings,
Rear thy tall masts, extend thine ample arms,
Catch the light breeze, nor dread impending harms—
Full oft shalt thou—if aught the muse avails—
Wing the broad deep with such delightful gales;
Full oft to either world announce glad news;
Oft allied realms promote the friendly views;
So shall each distant age assert thy claim;
And *Europe's Messenger* be known to fame!"

What though this plain, so uniform and vast,
Illimitably spreads its dreary waste;
What though no isles, nor vales, nor hills, nor groves,
Meet the tir'd eye that round th' horizon roves;
Yet, still collected in a narrow bound,
Ten thousand little pleasures may be found.—
Here we enjoy accommodations good,
With pleasant liquors, and well-flavour'd food;
Meats nicely fatten'd in Columbian fields,
And luscious wines, that Gallia's vintage yields,
On which you bards ('twas so in former days)
Might feast your wit, and lavish all your praise.

Within our ship, well-furnish'd, roomy, clean,
Come see the uses of each different scene—

Far in the prow, for culinary use,
Fires, not poetic, much good cheer produce;
The ovens there our daily bread afford,
And thence the viands load our plenteous board.

See various landscapes shade our dining hall,
Where mimic nature wantons round the wall;
There no vain pomp appears—there all is neat—
And there cool zephyrs fanning as we eat,
Avert the fervours of the noon-tide ray,
And give the mildness of the vernal day.

See the great cabin nigh, its doors unfold,
Show fleeting forms from mirrors fix'd in gold:
O'er painted ceilings brighter prospects rise,
And rural scenes again delight our eyes—
There oft from converse or from social sports,
We drink delight less dash'd than that of courts.

But when more sober cares the hour requires,
Each to his cell of solitude retires;
His bed—his books—his paper, pen and ink—
Present the choice, to rest, to read, or think.

Yet what would all avail to prompt the smile,
Cheer the sad breast, or the dull hour beguile;
If well-bred passengers, discreet and free,
Were not at hand to mix in social glee?
Such my companions—such the muse shall tell,
Him first, known once in war full well,
Our Polish friend,[1] whose name still sounds so hard,
To make it rhyme would puzzle any bard;
That youth, whose bays and laurels early crown'd,
For virtue, science, arts and arms renown'd!
Next him, behold, to grace our wat'ry scene,
An honest German[2] lifts his gen'rous mein;

[1] General Kosciusko.

[2] Colonel Senf.

Him Carolina sends to Europe's shore,
Canals and inland waters to explore;
From thence return's she hopes to see her tide,
In commerce rich, through ampler channel's glide.

Next comes the bleak Quebec's well-natur'd son:
And last our naval chief, the friend of fun,
Whose plain, frank manners, form'd on fickle seas,
Are cheerful still, and always aim to please;
Nor less the other chiefs their zeal display,
To make us happy as themselves are gay.

Sever'd from all society but this,
Half way from either world we plough th' abyss;
Save the small sea-bird, and the fish that flies
On yon blue waves, no object meets my eyes.
Nor has th' insidious hook, with lures, beguil'd
Of peopled ocean scarce a single child—
Yet luckless Dolphin, erst to Arion true,[1]
Nought could avail thy beauteous, transient hue,
As o'er the deck, in dying pang you roll'd,
Wrapp'd in gay rainbows and pellucid gold.

Now see that wand'rer bird, fatigu'd with flight
O'er many a wat'ry league, is forc'd to light
High on the mast—the bird our seamen take,
Though scar'd, too tir'd its refuge to forsake:
Fear not sweet bird, nor judge our motives ill,
No barb'rous man now means thy blood to spill,
Or hold thee cag'd—soon as we reach the shore
Free shalt thou fly, and gaily sing and soar!

Another grateful sight now cheers the eye,
At first a snow-white spot on yon clear sky,
Then through the optic tube a ship appears,

[1] *Ille sedet, citharamque tenet, pretiumque vehendi*
Cantat, et aequoreas carmine mulcet aquas. Ovid, *Fast.* 2.

And now distinct athwart the billows veers:
Daughter of ocean, made to bless mankind!
Go, range wide waters on the wings of wind—
With friendly intercourse far climes explore,
Their produce barter, and increase their store—
Ne'er saw my eyes so fair a pageant swim,
As thou appear'st, in all thy gallant trim!
Amus'd with trivial things, reclin'd at ease,
While the swift bark divides the summer seas,
Your bard (for past neglects to make amends)
Now writes to you—anon to other friends.—

Anon the scene, in Europe's polish'd climes,
Will give new themes for philosophic rhymes,
Ope broader fields for reason to explore,
Improvements vast of scientific lore!

Through nations blest with peace, but strong in arms,
Refin'd in arts, and apt for social charms,
Your friend will stray, and strive with studious care
To mark whate'er is useful, great or rare;
Search the small shades of manners in their lives,
What policy prevails, how commerce thrives;
How morals form of happiness the base,
How others, differ from Columbia's race;
And, gleaning knowledge from the realms he rov'd
Bring home a patriot heart, enlarg'd, improved.[1]

[1] Humphreys' *Miscellaneous Works*, edition of 1804, p. 211.

CHAPTER XVI

Humphreys in France

Humphreys' Arrival in France—Sends Washington his First Impressions—Meetings of the Commission—His Correspondence with Washington—Reverts to the Subject of Washington's "Memoirs"—Describes the Political Situation in Europe—Commercial Treaty with Prussia—Humphreys Entrusted with Commission to Purchase Presents for Officers in Late War—Description of Medal for Washington—Jefferson Appointed Minister to France—Selection of Houdon as the Sculptor of Statue of Washington—Letter to Washington again Reverting to his "Memoirs"—Washington Begs Humphreys to Write them—Answer of Humphreys—Jefferson's Description of Feeling towards America—Humphreys Sent to London.

HUMPHREYS arrived at L'Orient, France, on August 8, after a pleasant passage of twenty-four days. He thus announces his first impressions of France and the incidents of the voyage to Gen. Washington:

L'ORIENT, August 12, 1784.

Finding there was a vessel in this port destined for Virginia, I could not take my departure for Paris without informing my dear General of my safe arrival in France after a most delightful passage of twenty-four days; and as I cannot give a better description of the excellent accomodations & beautiful weather which we have had during the whole of our voyage, than I have already given in a Letter in verse to one of my poetical Correspondents, I take the liberty of enclosing a Copy of it for your amusement, Tho' I believe your Excellency is not much

attached to Poetry, yet I conceive nothing to be indifferent to you, which is interesting to one who prides himself in having a share in your confidence & friendship; and who feels at the same time a conscious pleasure in doing justice to those laudable efforts which are made by the Officers & Subjects of His most Christian Majesty for strengthening the Amity which so happily subsists between the two Nations, as well as for removing any little prejudice which might still remain among our Countrymen with respect to the cleanliness & accomodations which are to be found on board vessels in the service of France. I have not been long enough, to have acquired as yet any knowledge of Men & Manners, but I do not intend to be idle, and I hope to have the pleasure one day of communicating personally to your Excellency the result of some of my observations.

General Kosciusko & myself are to set off in a Carriage together for Paris tomorrow, I am now going to see a French Comedy for the first time, & must therefore after offering my best wishes for the happiness of Mrs. Washington & the family take my leave of your Excellency for the present.

I have the honour to be with every sentiment of friendship

Your Most Obedient & Most humble Servant,

D. Humphreys.

Genl. Kosciusko desires his best respects may be presented to your Exy.

His Excellency
General Washington.

The "Letter in Verse" above alluded to is the "Epistle to Dr. Dwight," already given in the previous chapter.

The influence and prestige won for France among the European nations by the "grand monarch," Louis XIV., were in part retained under his weaker successor, Louis XVI.

The splendour and gaiety of the Court, the extravagance and arrogance of the nobles, the depression and poverty of the peasantry were inevitably tending to discontent and tumult. But when in the summer of 1784, Col. Humphreys landed on the coast of Brittany there were no apparent signs of any disturbance. Philosophy and science, poetry and art were flourishing. Many men and women in Paris delighted to spend their days in literary and witty contests and their evenings either at the "House of Molière" witnessing classic plays, in some crowded ballroom, or in the famous salons of the day.

Voltaire, Rousseau, La Rochefoucauld, Diderot, D'Alembert, were the leaders of thought and opinion. The French Academy, whose forty "immortals" wore their honours proudly, was then at the height of its activity and popularity. To a man of poetic temperament and literary aspirations like David Humphreys, it was a pleasure to be admitted into such society and note the polish, glitter, and fascination of French thought and speech. His diplomatic position and the good offices of Dr. Franklin, whom all France delighted to honour, gave him a welcome everywhere, and entrance into the best and gayest society of Paris. The Court, the diplomatic levees and dinners, the halls of the Academy, the châteaux of the nobility, soon became familiar to him. While all Americans who visited Paris fell under the spell of the charms of French thought and French manners, in their gratitude for the aid France had rendered, our soldier, with his New England common sense and independence, was only strengthened in his love for his native land and broadened in his conception of the possibilities before her.

The Commission was called together in Paris shortly after Col. Humphreys' arrival. Gov. Jefferson says:

"Mr. Adams soon joined us at Paris and our first employment was to prepare a general form to be proposed to such nations as were disposed to treat with us."[1]

Frequent meetings were held and various drafts of proposed treaties were considered. The ministers of many of the European powers in Paris were approached to learn whether their countries would consider the subject. Many of them, it is said, appeared indifferent, and in fact "seemed to know little about us but as rebels who had been successful in throwing off the yoke of the Mother-country."[2]

With three nations, who appeared friendly and ready to consider the plan, Prussia, Denmark, and Tuscany, negotiations were opened.

Col. Humphreys maintained during his residence abroad on this diplomatic mission, his correspondence with Gen. Washington. In it, he gives his impressions of men, manners, and events, but says little of the work in which he was engaged. This was not necessary as the dispatches of Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Adams detailed the hard task of the Commissioners in convincing Europe that the United States, as a nation, was worthy of more consideration than a satirical stare of astonishment that it should think itself in any way competent to treat with the old world on equal terms.

Upon his arrival in Paris, he sends this brief acknowledgment of the letters in the packet entrusted to Gov. Jefferson:

PARIS, Aug. 18th, 1784.

A direct opportunity for America having offered itself thro' the medium of Col. Franks I again indulge myself in

[1] "Autobiography" in Jefferson's *Works*, i., p. 62. [2] *Ibid.*

writing to my dear General; and take the most heartfelt satisfaction in acknowledging the receipt of the Dispatches which were so obligingly addressed for me to the care of Gov. Jefferson—who arrived in this city about ten days before me. Tho I dare not undertake to say in this Letter how much I feel myself indebted to your goodness for these reiterated instances of your friendship, yet I may be allowed with the greatest truth to assert that I find myself under greater obligation than ever to support the character which your too great partiality has so ardently desired, endeavouring to persuade the world I am entitled to——

Franks is waiting—I have no time to add but by presenting my most affectionate regards to Mrs. Washington & assuring you, that

I have the honour to be my dear General
Your most Obe'd Servant
D. Humphreys.

Gen. Washington.

The following interesting note from Humphreys after his arrival at Paris is supposed to have been written to his brother at Derby.

Paris, Nov. 6, 1784.

. . . I have passed through the ceremony of going to Court & being presented to the King & Royal family. The King (Louis XVI) who is rather fat & of a placid good tempered appearance is thought to possess an excellent heart & to aspire only to the distinction of being considered as the father of his people.

On my arrival I found Gov. Jefferson had been about a week in Paris. He had taken lodgings & made provision for my accomodation. His politeness & generosity extended so far as to insist that I should live with him during our residence in Europe adding by way of inducement that it would not be an augmentation to his expense. He has since furnished a very elegant Hotel where letters will find me addressed thus—

Col. H. Secretary to the American Commission, Paris, Cul de Sac, Rue Faitbout.

I am Yours
D. Humphreys.

Love to all—

In a letter to Gen. Washington from Paris, September 30, 1784, Col. Humphreys mentions the restrictions which "my dearest General has had the precaution to suggest." He will make the fullest disclosure of his "feelings and observations which may consist with propriety and prudence." After a slight dissertation upon friendship he proceeds to speak of the jealousy with which friends sometimes treat the success of each other. He thus continues: "Happily nothing of this kind can take place between us."

. . . your course of glory is accomplished, you are safely landed in Port—& conscious I am, that influenced by friendship alone, it is the first wish of my heart to see some writer assume the pen, who is capable of placing your actions in the true point of light in which posterity ought to view them. That there is no one better able to perform this task than yourself, I am more & more convinced by reflecting on the subject myself as well as from hearing the sentiments of others upon it—I have even gone so far as to revolve in my own mind the manner in which such a plan could be most happily executed. This I think would be by arranging the various Events into Campaigns, or "particular Epochs"—selecting from your orders "Letters and Documents everything that is most interesting concerning these events, either by extracting the substance or inserting the whole of such Paper as tended most to elucidate the subject"—I am my Dear Genl. With every sentiment of affection your friend

D. Humphreys.

Gen. Washington.[1]

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C.

In a letter of November 11, 1784, he alludes to the disturbances over the navigation of the Scheldt, and to the visit of the brother of the King of Prussia.

PARIS, NOVR. 11, 1784.

MY DEAR GENERAL:

Colonel le Maire who is this moment getting off for Virginia affords an opportunity for communicating the latest & most important intelligence respecting European policies.

The Emperor[1] & the Dutch have gone so far in their quarrel about the navigation of the Scheld that there is hardly a possibility that either should recede,—indeed the act of recalling their minister amounts in the estimation of the world to a declaration of war—besides this, each party is making every hostile preparation; and the Emperor is said to have put 60,000 men in motion towards the quarter which must be the theatre of action, on the other hand, it is supposed the Dutch must have been morally certain of receiving succour from this nation & from Prussia, or that they would not have proceeded to such lengths as they have done.

Prince Henry the brother of the King of Prussia has been here some time, his visit is thought to involve some political objects in it—two days ago it was reported he had a private rendezvous with the King at Fontainbleau—it is also rumoured that a Camp of 50,000 men is immediately to be formed in this kingdom; & that Mr. de Vergennes will probably go out of office, but these I give as reports only.

If the war should commence it is likely that almost all Europe will first, or last, be engaged in it. How happy that our local situation does not require that we should become a party in the quarrels of other nations, and what a wonder that Britain could not have conjured up such a storm before our frail Bark had safely arrived in Port.

In Ireland the troubles do not seem to have subsided. Notwithstanding the interference in Dublin to prevent the election

[1] Joseph II., son of Francis I., and Maria Theresa. He reigned from 1865 to 1790.

of Members to attend the National Congress, the election has taken place & Sir E. Newenham, who is one, writes Dr. Franklin that the Congress will certainly convene.

I have the honour to be, my Dr Sir, your most obed. Servt,

D. Humphreys.

Gen. Washington.[1]

In his next epistle he gives a more cheerful view of the political aspect, and again urges Washington to undertake a Memoir of the Revolution.

Paris, January 15th, 1785.

My dear General:—

There is no great alteration in the complexion of the political world since I had the honour of addressing you last, except that there appears to be more probability that the contest between the Emperor & the Dutch will be accomodated without bloodshed, than there did at that period. Preparations for war are however continued, & the Count de Maillebois, Lieut. Gen. in the Armies of France now appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch forces, is to depart this week to assume his new command.

As to the state of our own politicks I can only say (and that for your ear alone) that the Treaties in contemplation which extend to all the commercial powers of Europe, tho' progressive, still they go slowly on; insomuch that I have had occasion to remark that there is no Sovereign in Europe but the King of Prussia who seems to do his business himself or even to know that it is done at all. I have expressed in several of my letters to you, my dear General, my ardent desire to see a good history of the Revolution, or at least of those scenes in which you have been principally concerned; I have suggested your undertaking it yourself, and I cannot help repeating, that to travel over again those fields of activity at leisure in your study would be a rational amusement, or if the task should

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C.

be too laborious, it might be called a noble & truly philosophic employment. Such a work by having truth, instruction & public utility for its objects would make the evening of your day more precious in the eyes of future ages, than they have appeared in the midst of glory & conquest in their meridian splendour. If however you should decline the task, & if ever I shall have leisure and opportunity, I shall be strongly tempted to enter on it, more with the design of rescuing the materials from improper hands or from Oblivion, than from an idea of being able to execute it in the manner it ought to be done. With perfect esteem & friendship I have the honour to be Your Excy's

Most Obed Hble Servt.
D. Humphreys.[1]

The progress of the negotiations with Prussia was satisfactory. Baron Thulemeyer, minister at The Hague, was appointed by Frederick his plenipotentiary for this purpose. The "projet" of the treaty was accepted by him with only slight alterations, and little change was made by the King before he gave it his approval.

Sometime in May, Humphreys renews his correspondence with Washington, and writes him this gossipy letter:

Paris, May, 1785.

My dear General:

Since I had the honour to receive by the last Packet your favour dated in Feby last, I have been unwell with a slight fever, & tho' recovered at this moment it has retarded my public business in such a manner as will prevent me from writing so particularly as I wished to have done by the present opportunity.

I am extremely concerned & mortified to find that you have been under the necessity of being so much occupied with important & tedious applications, I hope you will have been

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C.

able to procure some assistance before this time, and that you will not ultimately & altogether lose sight of the object I have more than once had the honour of suggesting to your Excellency.

I have not eat the bread of idleness—I have been pretty constantly employed in writings of one kind or another. Besides the correspondence which have been opened with Russia, The Emperor, Prussia, Denmark, Sweden, Saxony, Sicily, Sardinia, Venice, the Pope, Tuscany, Spain, Portugal & England—and the reports which have been made in consequence to Congress; I have kept an accurate Record of the Proceedings of the Ministers, the minutes of which have already filled a large folio Volume—Tho' treaties have proposed to be entered into with all the before mentioned Powers (except Sweden to whom supplementary Treaty has been proposed) yet none of them appear to be near a completion except with the King of Prussia & the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Several of these Powers, however, who have no commercial Treaties whatever, have declared that our vessels shall be rec'd in their ports in the most friendly manner & that we shall be upon equal terms with the most favoured Nation.

I am happy to learn Congress have appointed Mr. Adams their minister at the Court of London, it was a measure which had become indispensably necessary to prevent growing trouble and perhaps an open rupture between the two Nations. I am pleased to find that the appointment of Secretary has been given to one of your Aids-de-Camp.[1]

Upon my leaving America Mr. Morris invested me with the power of procuring the several honorary presents which had been voted by Congress to different Officers for their service during the late war. The Royal Academy of Inscriptions & Belle Lettres to whom I addressed a letter on the subject, have furnished me with the following device & inscriptions for the Gold Medal which is to be executed for your Excellency.—

On one side the head of the General, Legend:

[1] Col. William B. Smith of New York, who married Miss Adams.

Georgio Washington Supremo Duci Exercitum Adsertori Libertatis Comitia Americana.

On the reverse, taking possession of Boston, the American Army advances in good order toward the town, which is seen at a distance, while the British Army flies with precipitation towards the shore to embark on board the vessels with which the harbour is covered. In front of the American Army appears the General on horseback in a group of officers, whom he seems to make observe the flight of the enemy.

Legend: "Hostibus primo fugatis. Exergue Bostonium recuperatum die XVII Martii MDCCLXXVI."

I think it has the character of simplicity & dignity which is designed to transmit the remembrance of a great event to posterity. You really do not know how much your name is venerated on this side the Atlantic.

I have been fortunate in making several literary & noble acquaintances, by whom I have been treated with vastly more attention & hospitality than by any officers who served in America, if I except the Marquis la Fayette and one or two more.

It is pretty well decided now that there will be no war this summer. We have had a remarkably long and distressing winter. Many cattle have died for want of Forage & the present want of rain threatens the most disastrous consequences.

With my most respectful & affectionate regards to Mrs. Washington & Compts to all the family, I have the honour to be My Dr General

Your Sincere friend & hble Servant

D. Humphreys.[1]

The medal alluded to had been voted to Washington by Congress on March 25, 1776, after the evacuation of Boston by the British. "John Adams, John Jay and Stephen Hopkins were appointed a Committee to prepare a letter of thanks and device for the medal." (*Journal*

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C.

of Congress, II., p. 104. Lossing's *Field Book of the Revolution*, II.) The die was cut out by Duvivier.

The instructions referred to from the Financier of the Republic are contained in the following letter signed only by his initials:

OFFICE OF FINANCE, 15 June 1784.

LIEU^{T} COL^{O} HUMPHREYS,

SIR,

I am to acknowledge the Receipt of your favour of the nineteenth of last Month which could not be done immediately because Mr. Carleton was then at Annapolis. Enclosed you have a Copy of his Return of honorary Rewards to Officers voted by Congress which are still due, and in this list a Sword for yourself. The Medals and Swords can best be executed in Europe, and therefore I am now to request that you would as speedily as may be, cause them to be made and the Expence thereof you will pay by Drafts on M. Grand to whom be pleased to transmit the enclosed Letter of Credit. The Articles when purchased you will be pleased to have shipped by some safe Conveyance directed for the Secretary at War, and have Bills of Lading taken for the same on Account and Risque of the United States. You will transmit an Acco^{t} of the Expence to the Comptroller of the Treasury that it may be passed and the due Entries made—Be pleased also to have all these articles executed agreeably to the Resolutions of Congress respecting them which you will find in their Journals, Copy whereof is doubtless in your Possession.

I am with perfect Esteem, Sir, Your most obedient and hum. Servant,

R. M.[1]

Dr. Benjamin Franklin had for more than eight years resided as Minister Plenipotentiary in France, done much

[1] MSS. Library of Congress.

to overcome the dislike of Europe for America, and although he had frequently requested his recall, Congress felt his services were still needed as some especially delicate negotiations were to be undertaken which he could accomplish better than any one else. At length he was relieved from a burden almost too great for his eighty years, and Mr. Jefferson was then made sole Minister to France. Dr. Franklin sailed in July, 1785, and was followed to America by the good wishes of all Europe, and particularly those of his friends in France.

Previous to his departure the terms of the treaty with Prussia had been agreed upon. Duplicate originals with the English and French texts in parallel columns had been prepared. The signatures of the American Commissioners were affixed. The original treaties were sent in July, 1785, to Baron Thulemeyer at The Hague for signature, by William Short, of Virginia,[1] as a special secretary. He also was entrusted with "the original of our full powers" and an attested copy was to be retained by him. The original of the powers was to be returned to the Commissioners.

> That you may be under no doubt whether the full powers exhibited to you be sufficient or not, you receive from Colonel Humphries those which Baron Thulemeyer heretofore sent to us; if those which shall be exhibited agree with those in form or substance they will be sufficient.[2]

The native State of Washington had commissioned its former Governor to select a suitable sculptor to make a full-length statue of the hero for its Capitol. M. Jean Houdon, of Paris, then at the height of his fame, was

[1] Mr. Short was then acting as Private Secretary to Gov. Jefferson.

[2] Jefferson's *Works*, i., p. 373.

chosen.[1] He accepted, and came to America with Dr. Franklin.

So great was the apprehension then of the perils of the sea, and so large was the amount promised in any event to M. Houdon, or his representatives, that Governor Jefferson effected an insurance for fifteen thousand livres *tournois* on the life of the sculptor for the period of his absence.

The following letter was entrusted to Mr. Houdon for delivery to Gen. Washington:

PARIS, July 17, 1785.

MY DEAR GENERAL:—

I cannot permit M. Houdon to depart for Mt. Vernon without being the bearer of a line from me. I am very happy Mr. Jefferson has been able to procure him to make the voyage because I am persuaded he will be able to transmit an excellent likeness of you to the remotest ages. He is considered as one of the ablest statuaries in Europe & has performed some capital pieces for the Empress of Russia. I hope Congress will also employ him to make the Equestrian Statue which they have voted for you. His having once taken a perfect likeness will facilitate very much the execution of it. The likeness may likewise be multiplied to any number. Not only

[1] Jean Antoine Houdon was born of poor parents, at Versailles, France, on March 20, 1741. His talents for sculpture developed at an early age and in his thirteenth year he had done much meritorious work. In 1761 he gained the prix de Rome, and remained in Italy ten years. He made a careful study of the then recently excavated cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii. His colossal statue of St. Bruno, founder of the Order of the Chartreuse, is one of his masterpieces. Clement XIV. paid to the sculptor this high compliment: "The statue would speak out did not the rules of St. Bruno's order enjoin silence." Upon Houdon's return to France he was applauded and honoured. In 1777 he was made a member of the Academy, in 1796 chosen a member of the Institute, and in 1805 became a Professor in l'École des Beaux Arts. Among his best known works are the statues and busts of Turgot, Voltaire, Rousseau, Washington, La Fayette, Mirabeau, Diderot, Franklin, Napoleon, and Md'lle Arnauld. He died in his eighty-eighth year on July 16, 1828.

the present but future generations will be curious to see your figure taken by such an artist. And indeed my dear General, it must be a pleasing reflection to you, amid the tranquil walks of private life, to find that history, poetry, painting & sculpture will vie with each other in consigning your name to immortality.

He then refers to the question of the General's Memoirs:

As I know you never found me guilty of adulation, on any occasion, I am confident you will not believe me capable of flattery in the present instance even if I were to express in still stronger terms the interest I feel in your reputation. Be assured the advocates of your fame are very numerous in Europe, and that they wish, for the honour of human nature, & the benefit of mankind, to see it placed in a just & candid point of view. Since my arrival in France I have become acquainted with a circle of noble & literary Characters who are passionate admirers of your glory; and since my last letter to you I have been strongly urged by some of them to undertake to write either your life at large, or if I had not leisure & materials for that work, at least a sketch of your life & character. I have answered, were I master of my own time & possessed of adequate abilities, there is no task I would more willingly impose upon myself—but with a consciousness of these defects nothing but a fear that the work would ultimately devolve upon still worse hands could ever induce me to attempt it. This makes me wish still more devoutly my dear General (after you shall be eased of the drudging of business by the assistance of a Secy as you propose) that you would yourself rescue the materials from the unskillful & prophane into which they will one day or another fall.—

Some of my acquaintances here who had seen a little Poem of mine solicited for copies in such a manner as to make a publication of it necessary. It has also been reprinted in London & occasioned the author to be the subject of many newspaper paragraphs—tho' the sentiments & descriptions were not calculated to please English readers yet their criti-

cisms as far as I am able to learn, have been sufficiently favourable as to the merits of the composition.[1]

I have the honour of forwarding a copy herewith.—The certainty of peace and the consequence of news & politics leave me nothing to say on those subjects—in the meantime I find myself here in circumstances agreeable enough for a man of moderate expectations. My public character puts it in my option to be present at the King's Levee every Tuesday, & after the Levee to dine with the whole Diplomatic Corps at the Cte de Vergennes—It is curious to see forty or fifty Ambassadors, Ministers or other strangers of the first fashion from all the nations of Europe, assembling in the most amicable manner & conversing in the same language; what heightens the pleasure is their being universally men of unaffected manners & good dispositions. There is none of them more civil to us than the Duke of Dorset, with whom I often dine & who is the plainest & best bred Englishman I have seen at Paris.

[1] The Paris edition is a square quarto of twenty-eight pages without the name of any printer. The title is as in the edition of 1784, with "New Haven: Printed by T. S. Green. Paris Reprint—1785." The London edition has this title-page:

POEMS
ADDRESSED TO THE ARMIES
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY
DAVID HUMPHREYS, ESQ.
Colonel in the Service of the United States, and aid-de-camp to His Excellency the Commander in Chief.

Jam Fides, et pax, et honor, pudorque
Priscus, et neglecta redire virtus
Audet; apparetque beata pleno
Copia Cornu. Hor.
Incipient magni procedere menses. Virg.

New Haven: Printed by T. and S. Green, 1784.
Paris, reprinted 1785; and at London, in the same year for G. Kearley, at No. 46, Fleet Street. (Price Two Shillings.)

The Marquis la Fayette has just set off for Prussia. He is as much the favourite of the Americans here as in America— With my most respectful Compts to Mrs. Washington & the family I have the honour to be my dear Genl your sincere friend & hble Servt

D. Humphreys.

Genl. Washington.[1]

With his natural modesty, General Washington shrank from making himself the chief personage in the story of the Revolution, or himself recording his own part in the great struggle. We have one attractive and important letter, from Washington to his former Aide, written in July, 1785. With hospitable insistence he invited Col. Humphreys to make Mount Vernon his home and there, with access to all the General's papers, write the story of the Revolution. With prophetic vision Washington tells his friend of the peopling of the West, the necessity of maintaining an "open door" between it and the East, by waterways connecting the great rivers and intercepting the commerce of the broad Mississippi, and thus uniting the diverse interests of the two sections.

My dear Humphreys:

Since my last to you I have received your letter of the 15th of January & I believe that of the 11th of November, & thank you for them. It always gives me pleasure to hear from you & I should think if *amusements* would spare you, business could not so much absorb your time, as to prevent your writing more frequently, especially as there is a regular conveyance once a month by the Packet.

As the complexion of European politics seems now (from letters I have received from the Marq: de la Fayette, Chevrs Chastellux, De la Luzerne &c) to have a tendency to Peace, I will say nothing of War, nor make any animadversions upon

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C.

the contending Powers; otherwise I might possibly have said that the retreat from it seemed impossible after the explicit declarations of the parties: My first wish is to see this plague to mankind banished from off the Earth, & the sons and Daughters of this World employed in more pleasing & innocent amusements, than in preparing implements, & exercising them for the destruction of mankind, rather than quarrel about territory let the poor, the needy & oppressed of the Earth & those who want Land, resort to the fertile plains of our Western Country, the *second land of Promise*, & there dwell in peace, fulfilling the First & great commandment.

In a former letter, I informed you, My Dear Humphreys, that if I had talents for it, I have not leisure to turn my thoughts to commentaries; a consciousness of a defective education, and a certainty of the want of time, unfit me for such an undertaking; what with company, letters & other matters, many of them quite extraneous, I have not been able to arrange my own private concerns so as to rescue them from that disorder'd state into which they have been thrown by the war; & to do which is to become, absolutely necessary for my support, whilst I remain on the stage of human action. The sentiments of your last letter on this subject gave me great pleasure; I should be pleased indeed to see you undertake this business; your abilities as a writer; your discernment respecting the principles which lead to the decision by arms; your personal knowledge of many facts as they occurred in the progress of the War; your disposition to justice, candour & impartiality, & your diligence in investigating truth, all combining, fit you, when joined with the vigor of life, for this task; and I should with great pleasure, not only give you the perusal of all my papers, but any oral information or circumstances, which cannot be obtained from the former, that my memory will furnish and I can with great truth add that my house would not only be at your service during the period of your preparing this work but (& without an unmeaning compliment I say it) I should be exceedingly happy if you would make it your home. You might have an apartment to yourself, in which you could command your own time, you would

be considered and treated as one of the family; & meet with that cordial reception & entertainment which are characteristic of the sincerest friendship.

To reverberate European news would be idle & we have little of domestic kind worthy of attention: We have held treaties indeed with the Indians; but they were so unseasonably delayed, that these people by our last account from the Westward, are in a discontented mood supposed by many to be instigated there by our late enemies. Now, to be sure, fast friends; who from anything I can learn, under the indefinite expression of the treaty hold, & seem resolved to retain possession of our western Posts. Congress have also, after a long & tedious deliberation, passed an ordinance for laying off the Western territory into States, & for disposing of the land; but in a manner & on terms which few people (in the Southern States) conceive can be accomplished; both sides are sure, & the event is appealed to let time decide it. It is, however, to be regretted that local politics & self interested views obtrude themselves into every measure of public utility: but to such characters be the consequences.

My attention is more immediately engaged in a project which I think big with great political, as well as commercial, consequences to these States, especially the middle ones. It is, by removing the obstructions, & extending the inland navigation of our rivers, to bring the States on the Atlantic in close connection with those forming to the westward, by a short & easy transportation:—without this, I can easily conceive they will have different views—separate interests & other connections—I may be singular in my ideas; but they are these, that to open a door to, & make easy the way for those settlers to the westward (which ought to progress regularly & compactly) before we make any stir about the navigation of the Mississippi, & before our settlements are far advanced towards that river, would be our true line of policy.

It can, I think, be demonstrated that the produce of the western Territory (if the navigations which are now in hand succeed, & of which I have no doubt) as low down the Ohio

as the Great Kanowha, I believe, to the Falls, & between the parts above & the Lakes, may be brought either to the highest shipping Port on this or James River, at a less expense, with more ease (including the return), & in a much shorter time, than it can be carried to New Orleans if the Spaniards instead of restricting, were to throw open their Ports & invite our trade. But if the commerce of that country should embrace this channel, & connections be formed, experience has taught us (& there is a very recent proof with G. Britain) how next to impracticable it is to divert it; and if that should be the case, the Atlantic States (especially as those to the Westward will in a great degree fill with foreigners) will be no more to the present union, except to excite perhaps very justly our fears, than the Country of California is, which is still more to the Westward, & belonging to another power.

Mrs. Washington presents her compliments to you, & with every wish for your happiness,

I am, My Dr. Humphreys, &c, &c.,

G° WASHINGTON.

MT. VERNON, 25th July, 1785.[1]

To this very flattering invitation Col. Humphreys replied on November 1, 1785, from Paris. In this letter we find the first reference to the blackmail of the pirates of the Barbary States:

PARIS, Nov. 1st, 1785.

MY DEAR GENERAL:—

Being uncertain whether this letter will arrive at Bourdeaux in time to be carried to America by the vessel which

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C.

Col. Humphreys sent an extract of this letter to his brother, the Hon. John Humphreys, of Derby, Conn., in a letter of his dated from Mt. Vernon, August 4, 1786, which is given in Johnston's *Yale in the Revolution*, p. 154. The original, in 1888, was in possession of Mrs. William Humphreys of Ashtabula, Ohio, who was a niece by marriage.

brought me your favour of the 25th of July, I will content myself with assuring you how deeply I am penetrated by those expressions of confidence & friendship with which it is replete. Whether I should or should not, be at liberty to accept the liberal offer you make I cannot at this moment decide. I shall not however lose sight of the object—& so much I am able to assert, the execution of the Task in contemplation would be a very favourite pursuit, because with your oral assistance alone it could be completed in a satisfactory & useful manner.—

I had the honour of writing to you on the 10th of May & 17 of July since which no remarkable events have taken place in Europe.

The public tranquillity seems not likely to be soon interrupted & on the subject of peace let me observe that there never was since the creation of the world a moment in which so little hostility existed on the earth as at present—indeed I know of none except the depredations committed by the African Pirates on some of the Christian nations—it is scandalous & humiliating beyond expression to see the powerful maritime kingdoms of Europe tributary to such a contemptible Banditti—This sinister policy will force us in some degree to the same measure—you have doubtless heard of their having taken several American vessels, the number has been exaggerated by English lies—The Emperor of Morocco has given up the prisoners with the only vessel captured by his cruisers & seems disposed to make peace with us—the Algerines have lately taken two vessels (one from Boston the other from Phila.) this is the most potent of the Barbary States & will probably be the most insolent & intractable. The American Ministers in Europe who have been authorized to enter into negotiation with them are at this moment sending Mr. Barclay (Consul Genl in France) to Morocco & Mr. Lamb of Connecticut to Algiers as agents to negotiate Treaties under their Instructions.

The Marquis la Fayette has just returned from Prussia highly pleased with the reviews—he concurs with our general information that the English Papers have inculcated almost

universally reports very much to the prejudice of the American character & politicks—it rests for us by honour & honesty to give those reports the lye. Adieu my dear Gen be pleased to present me respectfully to Mrs. Washington & believe ever your sincere friend & most Hble Servt

D. Humphreys.

Gen. Washington.

The statement of Col. Humphreys in the foregoing letter that the American Commissioners in Europe were about to send representatives to Algiers to negotiate treaties with the Barbary States in regard to the depredations committed by the Algerine pirates is confirmed by the endorsement of Mr. Rideout on the following little note from Col. Humphreys which fortunately has been preserved:

(In pencil) Poet

37 Paris, Nov. 1st, 1785.

Sir,

I have the honour to receive your letter of the 15 ulto. from Genl. Washington & now take the liberty of recommending to your care an Ansr. to it, for your very obliging offer of service be pleased to accept the thanks of,

Sir,

Your most Obedt & very hble servt.

D. Humphreys.

Mr. Rideout.

The letter is thus endorsed:—

David Humphreys, Esqr.
Secretary of the American Embassy,
Paris 1, Novr. 1785.
Rec'd to d. by M^jor Lamb & Mr. Paul B. Randall on their way to Algiers. Answ^d 15 Novr. 1785.[1]

[1] Dreer Collection. Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pa.

Jefferson in a letter to Col. Monroe has this amusing reference to English detraction and falsehood:

At a large table where I dined the other day, a gentleman from Switzerland expressed his apprehension for the fate of Dr. Franklin, as he had been informed that he would be received with stones by the people who were generally dissatisfied with the Revolution, and incensed against all those who had assisted in bringing it about.

I told him his apprehensions were just, and that the people would probably salute Dr. Franklin with the same stones they had thrown at Marquis Fayette.[1]

I am well informed [writes Mr. Jefferson to Mr. Madison,] that the late proceedings in America have produced a wonderful sensation in England in our favor. I mean the disposition which seems to be becoming general to invest Congress with the regulation of our commerce, and, in the meantime the measures taken to defeat the avidity of the British government grasping at our carrying business. I can add with truth that it was not till these symptoms appeared in America that I have been able to discover the smallest token of respect towards the United States in any part of Europe. There was an enthusiasm towards us all over Europe at the moment of the peace.

The torrent of lies published unremittingly in every day's London paper first made an impression and produced a coolness. The republication of these lies in most of the papers of Europe, (done probably by the authority of the governments to discourage emigrations) carried them home to the belief of every mind. They supposed everything in America was anarchy, tumult, and civil war. The reception of the Marquis Fayette gave a check to these ideas. The late proceedings seem to be producing a decisive vibration in our favor.[2]

[1] Letter of Gov. Thomas Jefferson to Col. James Monroe, Paris, August 28, 1785. Jefferson's *Works*, i., p. 407, 408.

[2] Letter of Mr. Jefferson to Mr. James Madison, Paris, September 1, 1785. Jefferson's *Works*, i., pp. 413, 414.

This disposition made necessary the drafting of documents and the preparation of dispatches to be sent to whatever court seemed to be willing to entertain the proposition of our commissioners. The time of Col. Humphreys was so taken up that Mr. Jefferson could not call upon him to prepare the communications peculiar to the duties of the Minister to France. In a letter to Mr. Jay, Gov. Jefferson says: "Colonel Humphreys finds full occupation, and often more than he can do, in writing and reading despatches and proceedings of the general commissions."[1]

Late in the fall of 1785, it seemed probable that satisfactory negotiations could be carried on with Great Britain and Portugal. Col. Smith, Secretary of Legation at London, came to Paris with dispatches and confidential verbal communications to Mr. Jefferson. After a consultation between Mr. Jefferson and the Secretaries, it was thought best for Col. Humphreys to proceed to London with Col. Smith and there to await the opportunity of furthering the work of the Commission. On November 28th, he left Paris bearing dispatches and letters for Mr. Adams.

[1] Mr. Jefferson to Mr. Jay, Paris, Aug. 30, 1785, Jefferson's *Works*, i., p. 411.

CHAPTER XVII

Humphreys in England

Arrival of Humphreys in London—Letter of Jefferson to Adams on American Commerce—Humphreys' Reception in London—Letter of Jefferson to Humphreys on the Medal for Gen. Gates—Humphreys' Reply—Letter of Humphreys to John Jay on the Attitude of English People to America—Publication of his *Poem on the Happiness of America*—Sends Description of his Life in London to Washington—Progress of Negotiations with Portugal—Visit of Jefferson to London—Coolly Received at Court—Conclusion of Work of Commission—Letter of Adams to Jay Commending Humphreys—Humphreys' Return to Paris—Expiration of the Commission—Letter of Humphreys to Jefferson Announcing his Intended Return to America—Letter of Jefferson to Jay Announcing Expiry of the Commission and Commending Humphreys—Letter of Humphreys to Jefferson—Sails for America.

COL. HUMPHREYS arrived in London early in December; meanwhile, Mr. Jefferson had in a letter of November 27, 1785, to Mr. Adams, expressed his satisfaction that "Portugal is stepping forward in the business of treaty and that there is a probability that we may at length do something under our Commission which may produce a solid benefit to our constituents. I conjecture from your relation of the conference with the Chevalier dePinto that he is well informed and sensible."[1]

He then comments at length upon the mutual benefit of the proposed treaty. He considers various commodities and discusses the convenience and profit of their

[1] Letter of Mr. Thomas Jefferson to Mr. Adams, Jefferson's *Works*, vol. i., p. 492.

exchange; among them were flour, salt, cotton, wool, wines, East Indian goods, and coffee. He suggests that the Portuguese furnish the United States with coffee from Brazil. The whole letter shows that the writer understood the subject and that he was thoroughly aware of the commercial possibilities of his country.

Col. Humphreys received from Mr. Adams, his family, and the Americans in London, a most cordial welcome. Like all Americans who visited England at that time, he found that the "mother country" was not disposed to deal with justice, kindness or consideration in regard to the United States. So confident was she that her products must be used in America, and that America must employ her ships in the carrying trade that she did not even listen with patience to any proposition for the mutual advantage of the two nations. Mr. Adams was cautious and persistent and took every means to show leaders of British commercial opinion the benefit of the proposition made by the Commission. The presence of the Secretary increased his activity and many interviews and informal conferences were held with the British authorities and with the Portuguese minister. While in London, Col. Humphreys received several letters from Mr. Jefferson. In one of December 4, 1785, he called attention to the fact that in the design of the medal for Gen. Gates, commemorating the victory at Saratoga, the order of the Cincinnati is shown in the bust of Gen. Gates. He enclosed a letter from the engraver M. Gatteaux.[1]

PARIS, December 4, 1785.

DEAR SIR:

I enclose you a letter from Gatteaux observing that there will be an anachronism, if in making a medal to commemorate

[1] U. S. Archives, State Department, Washington, D. C., also Jefferson's *Works*, vol. i., pp. 496, 497.

the victory of Saratoga, he puts on General Gates the insignia of the Cincinnati, which did not exist at that date. I wrote him, in answer, that I thought so too but that you had the direction of the business; that you were now in London; that I would write to you and probably should have an answer within a fortnight; and, that in the meantime, he could be employed on other parts of the die. I supposed you might not have observed, on the print of General Gates, the insignia of the Cincinnati, or did not mean, that that particular should be copied. Another reason against it strikes me. Congress have studiously avoided giving to the public their sense of this institution. Should medals be prepared to be presented from them to certain officers, and bearing on them the insignia of the order, as the presenting them would involve an approbation of the institution, a previous question would be forced on them, whether they would present these medals? I am of the opinion it would be very disagreeable to them to be placed under the necessity of making this declaration. Be so good as to let me know your wishes on this subject, by the first post.

Mr. Short has been sick ever since you left us. Nothing new has occurred here since your departure. I imagine you have American news. If so, pray give us some. Present me affectionately to Mr. Adams and the ladies and to Colonel Smith; and be assured of the esteem with which I am dear Sir your friend and servant

TH. JEFFERSON.

COL. HUMPHREYS.[1]

In his answer, dated simply 1786, Humphreys says:

DEAR SIR:—

I have been duly honoured with your favour of Dec. 4th, and, on the subject of Gatteau's application take the liberty to inform you that I never had an idea of his engraving the insignia of the Cincinnati.

I clearly see the impropriety of it. I should, therefore, be much obliged if you would take the trouble of giving him

[1] Jefferson's *Works*, vol. i., p. 496.

definitive instructions on this and any points that may occur in the execution of the Medal.

A vessel which has just arrived in 24 days from Philadelphia brings advice that Dr. Franklin had been unanimously elected President of the State.

Mr. Hardy of the delegation from Virginia died at New York on the 17th of October. There is no other transatlantic intelligence worthy to be transcribed.

Mr. Eden's appointment as Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of France for negotiating commercial arrangements is a topic of conversation at this time. It is thought from this circumstance that the Administration are more in earnest to make a commercial treaty with France than they have hitherto been. You will find the Anti-Ministerial papers are filled with paragraphs respecting Eden's defection.—

Upon our route from Paris here we fell in company & travelled with a Mr. Payne who has been in a public character at Morocco—he informs me, in negotiation at that court the novelty of a present is frequently of more consequence than the intrinsic value of it. He mentioned as an instance in proof, that the Emperor appeared more pleased with a hand-organ than any other present which he gave him. He speaks well of the Emperor's personal character, tho' I believe he has not fully succeeded in the object of his mission, as he appeared in doubt how he should be received on his return here.

I am sorry to hear of Mr. Short's illness & beg my best Comp^{ts} may be presented to him. Those of Mr. Adams' family & Col. Smith attend you.

I am with the sincerest affection,
Dear Sir,
Your most obedt & Hble Servt.
D. Humphreys.

London.
Gloucester Square, No. 18.
His Exy,
T. Jefferson.[1]

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

In a letter to the Hon. John Jay, then Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Humphreys gives the reason for his visit to London, and comments on the attitude of the English people to the United States.

London, Decr 24, 1785.

Sir,

As there was nothing to be done at Paris for the present under the Commission to which I am Secry it was judged not inexpedient that I should come to this place where there was a possibility some negotiations for treaties of Amity & Commerce might be carried on with Great Britain & Portugal. I arrived here in consequence three weeks ago.—

Until my arrival here I was not fully apprised of the unfavourable discriptions of people—In this alone Administration & opposition coincide—The Newspapers of both parties have co-operated to produce a belief throughout the Continent that the United States are on the brink of perdition. To counteract in some degree these unfavourable sentiments I have written in my leisure hours a Poem of considerable length addressed to the Citizens of the United States calculated to show their superior advantages for happiness over all the rest of mankind, whether considered in a physical, moral, or political point of view. The work is in the press and I shall have the pleasure of transmitting a copy to you as soon as it shall be compleated.

Not having the honour of being personally known to you, I should not have troubled you with this, but for the sake of intimating that as the appointment under which I act expires in the spring unless Congress should find further occasion for my services in Europe I shall embark for America in the Month of April next.

I have the honour to be

With perfect respect

Sir

Your Most Obedt & Most Hble Servt

D. Humphreys.

P. S. Mr. Adams' dispatches having been closed last night, I enclose two papers of to-day.[1]

His *Address to the Armies* had been praised in the English reviews and newspapers, and he had received many private letters commending it. The presence of the poet in London gave literary society an opportunity to show attention and courtesy to a transatlantic author. That society had lost its great ornament more than a year before, the massive and learned Dr. Johnson. There still remained, however, the eloquent Edmund Burke, and the witty Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and other lesser lights.

Robert Burns was touching the hearts of the Scotch with his songs, and in obscurity the gentle Charles Lamb and the contemplative William Wordsworth were preparing for their future brilliant careers. While there was at that time no great originality in the work of English writers, and literature was passing from old to new modes of expression and subject, it was an agreeable circle into which Col. Humphreys was now introduced.

In the spring of 1786, the poem was completed, and an edition printed in London. It was reprinted in the same year at Hartford. It became popular and "passed through eight editions in little more than four years."[2]

Col. Humphreys in February sent an interesting account of his life in London to Gen. Washington.

LONDON, Febry 11th, 1786.

MY DEAR GENERAL:

I wrote to you by the ship which brought me your affectionate favour of the 25th of July; since which I have been hon-

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

[2] *A Poem on the Happiness of America—Addressed to the Citizens of the United States*, London—1786. Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1786. For other editions see Bibliography.

oured by the receipt of your letters of the 1st of September & 30th of October—they reached me a few days ago in this city, where I have been about two months.

You may naturally expect I should give some little account of this great wonder of the world, and the reception I have experienced in it. This city is in extent as well as population considerably larger than Paris, the streets are wider and cleaner, and the appearance of some particular squares perhaps more elegant, tho' in general I cannot say I like the style of building here as well as in France. But in Horses & Equipages I must give the preference infinitely to those which I have seen in this country. The Play houses, public places & palaces are by no means equal to the same articles in France. I have frequented the Theatres very often and have found an exquisite pleasure in seeing the famous Mrs. Siddons perform who is far superior to anything I have ever beheld on the stage.

I have been three times at Court, first at the Levee to be presented (by Mr. Adams) to the King, then at the Drawing Room to pass thro' the same ceremony to the Queen, and the day before yesterday on the splendid occasion of the Queen's birthday, I was introduced (not as a public character), but as Col. H. from the U. S. of America & was received in the same manner as any other foreigner would have been. I forbear to give you a detail of the brilliancy of the birthnight ball, as I fear I should make a bad hand of describing that kind of pageantry, & I am not certain you would take much pleasure in reading it, supposing the description to do justice to the exhibition—I will only say in honour of America that Mrs. Adams appeared to good advantage, being an extremely decent Lady, and that Miss Adams in beauty & real taste in dress was not excelled by any young lady in the room. Now I am on the subject of American Ladies, I will venture to add that there have been in Europe some very good specimens of beauty from America since I have been on this side the water, for example, Mrs. Platt of Hartford, Miss Hamilton from Philadelphia—Mrs. Loyd I have not seen, she is in the Country, her husband I saw one evening quite intoxicated, since which I am told he is in confinement for debt.

With regard to the present temper of this country to America, I can say nothing decisively, until some communication shall come from the part of Administration, in consequence of overtures for a Treaty of Commerce which have been made by us to them—however in my private opinion very little, if anything will be done; A spirit of infatuation will probably influence their Councils until they shall have diverted our commerce irrevocably into some other channel.

It is an object of the greatest curiosity for an American to be present at the Debates in Parliament. I have heard most of the principal speakers. Mr. Pitt is undoubtedly a man of talents as well as elocution. Oppositions are not so formidable as they have been, nor does the session promise to be long or violent as the last. There appears however to be a spirit awakened in India which may bring on some interesting discussions, which may be productive of convulsions, perhaps (one day) of a revolution in that country. I have met with few British Gentlemen with whom I have been acquainted in America, such as I have seen have behaved with civility. As have several members of Parliament, literary & other respectable characters to whom I have been introduced. Sir George Collier (who commanded the fleet up the North River in 1779) in a large company where Col. Smith & myself were present, having inadvertently mentioned the "Rebel Flag" upon perceiving his mistake came up to us & apologized for it.

I shall set out for Paris in a few days, & possibly for America in the spring; should I not arrive in the month of May I will still hope to receive letters from you, as in that case my residence in Europe may be protracted for some years longer. With the warmest wishes for the health and happiness of Mrs. Washington & your immediate Connections I have the honour to be, Most Sincerely Your friend & devoted Servt.

D. Humphreys.

Gen. Washington.[1]

The progress of the negotiations with Portugal and some signs of a better disposition on the part of the British

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

foreign office made it necessary for Mr. Jefferson to go to London in March. With the Chevalier de Pinto the work of completing a treaty was pleasant and rapid. The only article to which he made an objection was that of admitting American flour, as he observed that although he approved of it himself, "several nobles of great influence at their court, were owners of windmills in the neighbourhood of Lisbon, which depended much for their profits on manufacturing our wheat, and that this stipulation would endanger the whole treaty."[1]

Mr. Jefferson, like Mr. Adams, we are told, found his reception at court chilling. "On my presentation, as usual, to the King and Queen, at their levées, it was impossible for anything to be more ungracious than their notice of Mr. Adams and myself."[2]

As the term of the Commission expired in May and there seemed to be no more work possible to be finally accomplished the Secretary determined to sail for America in the French April packet, with the approval of the Commissioners. He left London in February bearing with him this note from Mr. Adams to the American Secretary for Foreign Affairs:

GROSVENOR SQUARE, Feb. 9, 1786.

SIR:—

Colonel Humphreys informs me that he expects to return to America in the Spring, if he should not receive orders from Congress to remain longer in Europe. It would be doing injustice to the public as well as to this Gentleman if I were to let him return home without the best Testimony I can give him, of my entire satisfaction in his conduct, from his first arrival, and without the fullest recommendations of him to Congress. This gentleman and another whom Congress have employed in Europe, from General Washington's Family

[1] Autobiography, Jefferson's *Works*, i., p. 64. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

have accomplishments which do Honour to their appointments and to the great Model under whom they were formed in the Service of their Country.

With great Respects and Esteem I have the Honour to be Sir your Most obedient and most humble Servant

JOHN ADAMS.

His Excellency
JOHN JAY, Esq.,
Secretary of State for the Department of foreign affairs.[1]

Upon his return to Paris, Col. Humphreys put into a form for convenient reference the minutes and other documents relating to the business of the Commission, he superintended the final work upon the presentation swords, and gave final directions concerning the various medals then in the hands of the engravers.

On March 2, 1786, he writes from Paris to Mr. Jefferson concerning the expiration of the Commission, by limitation, in May, and his wish to sail for home—. "Unless I should receive in the meantime such advices as might render it inexpedient." He mentioned the letter given to him "by your very dear colleague" and Mr. Adams had given his consent to the Colonel's departure and also a letter to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, indicative:

of my not having left Europe with your displeasure, nor conducted myself while there in such a manner as to reflect disgrace on my country. Something of this kind might be the rather necessary from the unhappy misunderstandings which have formerly prevailed among the public characters from America in Europe of which at present there is happily no vestige remaining.

Having been informed this day that the Packet will sail from L'Orient the beginning of April I should wish to make use of so favourable a season—And as in that case I may not

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

probably have it in my power at the moment of my departure to express all my gratitude for your extraordinary attentions & kindness to me, permit me on the present occasion to return my most grateful acknowledgements for them; & to assure you, wherever I may be I shall ever retain the most lively & unalterable sense of my obligations for the flattering instances of friendship, which you have been pleased to honour me with.

Should Mr. Adams and yourself have any joint letter to forward to America on the subject of the commission, I should also be happy in being the bearer of it, if it could be conveyed here by the last week in March; or if it should be in any degree necessary I would willingly cross to London & take my passage in the English Packet.

With sentiments of the sincerest Attachment & consideration I have the honour to be Your Excellency's Most obliged and most humble servant,

D. Humphreys.

His Excellency
T. Jefferson, Esqr.[1]

Mr. Jefferson did not allow Col. Humphreys to leave Paris without bearing his testimony to the zeal and efficiency of his Secretary. He accordingly gave the Colonel the following letter of commendation which he was to present to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs on his return home.

Paris, Mar. 5, 1786.

Sir:—

The several commissions, to which Congress were pleased to appoint Col. Humphreys Secretary of Legation, being shortly to expire, and a French packet offering him a convenient passage in the month of April, he proposes to avail himself of that occasion of returning to his own country & of there representing his respects and thanks to Congress. As a member of the several commissions with which his office was

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

connected I think it my duty to bear testimony to his ready, able, & faithful discharge of all its duties, and I beg leave through you to present this testimony to Congress, & to assure them that his talents and dispositions are such as they may repose themselves on with security should they think proper to avail our country of them on any future occasion.

I have the honour to be with sentiments of the highest respect & esteem Sir

Your most obedient
& most humble servt.
TH. JEFFERSON.[1]

Col. Humphreys writes to Mr. Jefferson from Paris, on March 17, 1786, enclosing "several letters which Mr. Harison brought from Spain." That gentleman was "not very sanguine in his expectations of our succeeding in the present negotiations with the Barbary States." He can give his correspondent no particular news. "There was, however," he continued,

something at the Marquis de la Fayette's which put one in mind of the freedom of investigation in America: it was an assemblage of such friends of America as these, the Duc de Rochefoucault, the Marquis de Condorcy and Chastellux, Messrs. Metza, Crevecoeur &c. to hear a discussion on American politics and commerce by a M. Marville; the tendency of whose performance is good, some of the observations new, many of them ingenious; but perhaps there is too much declamation blended with them.

The badness of the weather and the roads made us anxious lest you should have suffered by your Journey.

Your friends all enquire when you may be expected.

I have begun to translate the Travels of the Marquis de Chastellux in America, and expect to make some progress during my voyage to that Continent.

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C., also Jefferson's *Works*, i., pp. 537, 538.

With every Sentiment of attachment and esteem,
I have the honour to be Your Excellency's Most Obedt
& most Hble Servt
D. Humphreys.

I pray you will have the goodness to give my Complts to Mr. Paridise's family & any others who may enquire respecting me.

His Excellency Mr. Jefferson.[1]

Early in April, Col. Humphreys bade his friends in Paris good-bye, and set out on his long journey, by carriage or horseback, to L'Orient to take the packet. It was his intention, as he wrote Mr. Jefferson, to continue, on shipboard, his translation of the travels of the Marquis de Chastellux in America. How far he proceeded is not known. When he commenced it he was probably unaware that a translation was already made and about to be published in London, with many explanatory notes.[2]

In a note by the Marquis, Col. Humphreys is styled "this brave and excellent soldier," and called "a poet of great talents." In mentioning the *Address to the Army* he speaks of its having been read in England "after the manner of the ancients," and that "in spite of the national jealousy and the affectation of depreciating everything American." The English translator explains that the poem is admired by "that numerous and enlightened class of free spirits who have always supported and wished prosperity to the glorious struggle of America."[3]

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

[2] *Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 1781, 1782*, by the Marquis de Chastellux.

[3] Chastellux' *Travels*, English translation, pp. 359, 360. Note.

CHAPTER XVIII

Humphreys' Return to America

Humphreys' Arrival in New York—Announces his Arrival to Mr. Jay—Re-visits New England—Writes his Impressions to Jefferson—Reaches Mount Vernon—Writes to his Brother John—Expresses his Willingness to Enter Politics—Letter of Jefferson to Humphreys—Humphreys Elected Member for Derby in Connecticut Assembly—Sad Financial Condition in Connecticut—Letter to Washington on Asgill Case—The Cincinnati Meets, and other Matters—Speech of Humphreys in Assembly—Advocates Production of Better Agricultural Products—And Development of Certain Industries—Committee on Agriculture and Manufactures Appointed.

THE passage from France occupied thirty-two days. Col. Humphreys announced his arrival to Mr. Jay in this brief letter:

NEW YORK, May 19th, 1786.

SIR:—

I take the earliest moment to inform you of my arrival in the French Packet from L'Orient, and that I shall have the honour of waiting upon you (as soon as my baggage can be brought on shore) with letters from American Ministers at the Courts of London and Versailles. In the meantime I have only to anticipate that as the Commissions to which I was Secretary were to expire on the 12th instant it is with the approbation of those Ministers I have returned to this Continent. I hope that my letters of Dec. & Feb. last on the subject of my return have been regularly received.

Perhaps I ought also to inform you that the unparalleled tranquillity which prevails throughout the world prevents me from being the bearer of any political intelligence of great importance. Some late foreign papers herewith forwarded will likewise show that there is no news of public nature. Nor had anything very recent come to hand respecting the piratical States of Barbary. Should there be any orders on the part of Congress, I shall be duly honoured with them, by their being transmitted to Mount Vernon in Virginia, where (after a very few days) I go to reside.

With the highest consideration & esteem
I have the honour to be Sir
Your most obedient & most humble Servant
D. Humphreys.

His Excellency
John Jay.[1]

Humphreys hastens to announce his arrival to General Washington:

New York, May 23d, 1786.

My last letter to you, My dear General, was dated in Febry at London and forwarded by Captain Clagget late of the Maryland line; in that I had the honour of informing you of my intention to return to America in the Spring. In this, I have the pleasure to announce my safe arrival from L'Orient after a pleasant passage of 32 days.

I am charged with Compliments & messages for your Excellency on the part of many of our friends in France; but have no news of considerable consequence to communicate.

I propose setting out in three or four days on a visit to Connecticut & perhaps as far as Boston, this will occupy me for some weeks, after which I hope to have the pleasure of embracing you at Mount Vernon, and of remaining with you at least until the winter. I need not say how much felicity I anticipate on the occasion, nor how many thousands there are

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

who would be envious of my situation. Nor am I little flattered with it. For although I have met with many flattering circumstances in my absence, yet certainly no gratification arising from them could come in competition with the consciousness of possessing no inconsiderable share in your friendship. My horse having been disposed of, in my absence, I shall come either in the stages or water, and will not hesitate to trespass on your goodness by asking the favour of one of your horses when I may want to take the air on horse back.

I beg my best respects may be given to Mrs. Washington, my Compliments to the rest of your friends & that you will ever consider in the number of those who are most sincerely attached to you, him who has the honour to be

My dear General

Your Most obedient & Most humble Servant

D. HUMPHREYS.

GEN. WASHINGTON.[1]

We have no record of his meeting with his parents and other friends on his return home. They would observe that he had returned with undiminished affection for the scenes of his childhood; with added grace of manner and polish of speech; but with the same strong patriotism and desire for America's glory as when he had fought in her battles. Writing to Mr. Jefferson from Hartford he gives his impressions of the state of the country and the changes that even two short years had made.

HARTFORD, June 5, 1786.

DEAR SIR:—

By means of a merchant vessel that sails from this place for L'Orient I have the pleasure to inform you of my safe arrival after an agreeable passage of 32 days; altho' I cannot give so high commendations on the high accomodations of the French Packet as I could have done on a former occasion. The fine-

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

ness of the weather & the hilarity of the passengers, however, atoned for some circumstances not perfectly satisfactory.

As I have been but one week in N. York, & another in this town, I cannot undertake to give with precision a state of the politics in this country; but if I may rely in some measure on the opinions of almost every person with whom I have conversed, our federal concerns are not in a very promising situation. For notwithstanding the States of Rhode Island & New York have at length come into the 5 pr cent. impost, yet, I am informed the restrictions are such as makes it doubtful whether their offers can be accepted. These & several other States have at their late session emitted paper money.

Pennsylvania has prohibited the collection of the impost until the supplementary requisitions shall have been adopted by all the States. This I fear will not be done by the Legislature of Connecticut who are now sitting.

In the meantime there is not a single farthing in the public treasury, the civil list is unpaid and the few troops at the westward in danger of disbanding for want of money & supplies. Desertions have been so frequent that a Major Wyllys of this State has lately ordered some prompt executions for which he is in arrest by Order of Congress. Thos. Hutchins & the Surveyors are, however, just setting out for the Western country. Congress accepted last week the cession of Connecticut.

The refusal of the British to deliver up the frontier posts is not generally known but, so far as I have heard it spoken of, it seems to excite a spirit of indignation. Some hostilities have lately been committed by the savages. The public mind is in anxious expectation respecting the piratical powers. Lamb's conduct in obtaining his appointment is considered as very extraordinary: his character is perhaps much lower here than we could have conceived.

Congress have not yet done anything on foreign affairs. An attempt was made last week to appoint a Minister to the Hague. Mr. Izard had six states, but no choice could be made. Congress will continue together through the Summer.

I believe the country is much altered in many respects

since we left it. Gov. Clinton is said to have become an anti-federalist. He was not in N. York when I was there. Certain it is, the issue of a paper currency in that State depended upon him. Many people appear to be uneasy & to prognosticate revolutions they hardly know how or why. A scarcity of money is universally complained of. But to judge by the face of the country, by the appearance of ease & plenty which are to be seen everywhere one would believe a great portion of the poverty & evils complained of, must be imaginary.

I will write to Mr. Mazzei by the French Packet. I beg my best compts to the Marquis de la Fayette, Mr. Short & all our friends.

With the sincerest esteem & friendship I have the honour to be

Yr Most obedt & humble Servt.
D. Humphreys.

P. S. Monroe is married to a Miss Courtwright.—King to Miss Alsop & Osgood to Mrs. Franklin, a quaker widow.[1]

An item in the *Connecticut Courant* announced the arrival of Col. Humphreys, and said that "he brought with him a number of elegant swords made agreeably to different resolves of the honourable the Congress to be presented to a number of gentlemen, who by acts of heroism and valour, distinguished themselves in the late Revolution." The letter of Gen. Knox, Secretary at War, presenting the sword for Col. Marinus Willett, awarded for his bravery in a successful rally on the enemy investing Fort Schuyler," is printed in full. The names and deeds of the other eight officers to whom the swords were awarded are also given. Among them were the two aides to Washington, Cols. Humphreys and Tilghman.[2]

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

[2] *Connecticut Courant*, Monday, June 5, 1780, No. 1115, under items headed New York, June 1.

The following interesting correspondence is taken from the

COLUMBIAN HERALD OR THE INDEPENDENT COURIER OF NORTH AMERICA

CHARLESTON, S. C. 3rd August, 1786.

Col. Humphreys, having been charged to procure in Europe the honorary presents which had been voted by Congress to different officers, during the late war, on his return to America, addressed the following letter to the Secretary at War:

NEW YORK, May 22, 1786.

SIR,

I have the honor to forward herewith the ten swords which I have procured to be executed in France, by the orders of Congress. You will find the names of the officers, to whom these honorary presents were voted, engraved on the different swords. Receipts for the monies paid to the sword-cutter are likewise enclosed.

The medals not having been completed at the time of my departure from France, I have left the business with Mr. Jefferson, and prayed him to have them transmitted to you, agreeably to the instructions I had received. Some further information respecting the number of the British killed, taken prisoners, &c. will be necessary, before the medal for Gen. Morgan can be finished. It would be very interesting for the engraver to have a good profile of General *Greene*, as he has not been able to form a strong resemblance from the miniature picture I put into his hands. The likenesses of General Washington and General Gates, I flatter myself, will be perfect.

I cannot omit to mention here the alacrity of *The Royal Academy of inscriptions and belles lettres of Paris*, in furnishing me with devices and inscriptions proper to perpetuate the remembrance of the great events, on occasion of which those several medals were ordered to be struck. Their zeal, in this instance, is an additional proof of the good disposition which

prevails among the literati of that kingdom for our rising empire.

I have the honour to be,
Sir, your most obedient,
And most humble servant,
D. Humphreys.

The hon Major Gen. Knox
Secretary at War.

Answer of the Secretary at War

War-Office, May 25, 1786.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 22nd instant, accompanying ten elegantly mounted swords, which you procured to be executed in France, by the order of Congress. The names of the officers, for whom these presents are designed, are engraved thereon, agreeably to the dates of the respective resolutions of Congress on the subject.

I return you the receipts for the monies paid to the sword-cutter, and request you to lodge them with the Comptroller-General.

I shall transmit a copy of your letter to Congress, and the swords, that they may know the honorable manner in which you have executed their intentions; and also, that they may be acquainted with the zeal, and good disposition which actuated that learned body, *The Academy of inscriptions and belles lettres of Paris*, in furnishing you with devices and inscriptions for the medals ordered by Congress, and which are yet to be executed.

I have the honor to be
With perfect respect, sir,
Your very humble servant,
H. Knox.

Col. David Humphreys.

War-Office of the United States

New York, May 25, 1786.

Sir,

The United States in Congress assembled, having been pleased, by their act of the 7th of November 1781, to direct that an elegant sword be presented to you, in their name, as a testimony of your fidelity and ability, I have the honor, sir, to deliver to you this illustrious memorial of the approbation of your country.

The unequivocal declaration of your merit, by the supreme authority of the United States, and the honorable pledge thereof, must be highly gratifying to a mind conscious of unremitted zeal and patriotism.

This occasion, sir, affords me the pleasure of assuring you that I am,

With great respect and sincerity
Sir, your most obedient
And most humble servant,
H. Knox.

Col. David Humphreys.

It was late in July when Col. Humphreys turned his face southward. Writing to his brother John from Mount Vernon on August 4, 1786, he says:

My journey was more agreeable than could have been expected at such a sultry season. It was a fortunate circumstance that we had such a plenty of rain as never to be incommoded by the dust. By setting off at two or three o'clock in the morning we also eluded the intensity of the heat. The variety of characters to be met within the stages is truly amusing. I rested some days at the principal places on my route where I received uncommon marks of attention. Indeed I have found, by recent experience, as well as by former travelling, a great deal in the world, that a Poet like a Prophet is not without honour except *in his own country*.

Here I am domesticated in the family of the greatest of men. My reception was the most cordial that can possibly be conceived. My situation is such as would excite the envy of thousands.

He alludes to Gen. Washington's request that he should write a history of the Revolution, and remarks:

Whatever I may decide for the moment, I shall not absolutely lose sight of the object. In the meantime it affords me no unpleasant reflection, to be convinced that the man in the United States who entertains the most favourable sentiments of my morals and abilities is precisely the greatest man in them. Nor is it derogatory to one's reputation to hold so high a place in the confidence & friendship of Gen. Washington. These are the circumstances that would be flattering to the vanity of almost any man. For myself I feel a rational satisfaction that my honest endeavours to do my duty have met with success & merited his approbation.

He adds an interesting account of the daily life of the retired commander.

He rises about 5 o'clock & passes a great part of his time in superintending his plantations; you may judge how extensive they are when I tell you he has about 800 acres of wheat & 700 of corn this year. Besides this attention to the improvement of his estate he is a good deal occupied in opening the navigation of the Potomac, and in answering the letters of his numerous correspondents in Europe as well as in America.

Col. Humphreys alludes to a letter just received by the General in which the French translation of the *Address to the Armies* was mentioned favourably; and that it "had been received with much applause, that the King and Queen having read it with great satisfaction have testified their suffrage in favour of the author." He expected to be back at Yale in time for the Commencement.

In reference, possibly, to certain overtures that had been made to him, he says:

I have no objections to its being known by my friends who are freemen of your town that I shall be on the spot, and if they should think proper to appoint me one of their representatives I will serve them as such—indeed you may show this letter where you think you can do it with discretion and propriety.[1]

While at Mount Vernon Col. Humphreys was busy looking over the materials for the contemplated Memoirs of the Revolution, enjoying the pleasant society which the General and Mrs. Washington gathered round them, and accompanying his host on rides through the estate. During his residence there he received a cordial letter from Mr. Jefferson written from Paris, May 7, 1786.

PARIS, May 7, 1786.

DEAR SIR:—

My stay in London having been considerably longer than I had expected, I did not arrive in this place till the last day of April. I found here your kind letter of the 4th of that month acknowledging much more than they deserved, my little attentions to you. Their only merit was their being faithful testimonies of a sincere regard for you. The obligations have in fact been on my side, and I shall ever consider it as such. I sincerely wish that on your arrival in America your own preference may be gratified by an appointment on that side of the water to which your inclinations lead you. I have received the books & papers you mention & will undertake to have finished what you left undone of the medals, or at least will proceed in it, till the matter shall be put into better hands. My principal object in my journey to London was accomplished by arrangements with Portugal. They are almost exactly in the terms of those with Prussia, except that the

[1] This letter is given in full in Prof. Johnston's *Yale in the Revolution*, pp. 153–155.

general license to trade is restrained to those places where any foreign nation is admitted. The Tripoline offered peace for 30,000 guineas for Tripoli, & as many for Tunis. Calculating on this scale Morocco should ask 60,000 & Algiers 120,000, England declines all arrangements with us. They say their commerce is so necessary to us that we shall not deny it to ourselves for the sake of the carrying business. As the only trade they leave us is that with Great Britain immediately, & this is a losing one. I hope we shall show them to have sense and spirit enough to suppress that, or at least to exclude them from any share in the carriage of our commodities. Their spirit towards us is deeply hostile, and they seem as if they did not fear a war with us. Should such an event become necessary, we have need of but only one resolution to place us on sure ground. That is to abandon that element, where they are strong, and we nothing, & to decide the contest on terra firma where we have all to gain & can lose nothing. The death of the King of Prussia is constantly expected; perhaps that event may bring on a general broil. I am too lately returned here to be able to give you any of the news of the place. I shall hope to hear from you soon & often and am with sincere esteem Dear Sir

Your friend & servt
TH. JEFFERSON.[1]

Mr. Jefferson also writing on the same day to Mr. Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts, spoke thus of the late Secretary: "I am induced from my own feeling, to recommend Colonel Humphreys to your care. He is sensible, prudent and honest, and may be very firmly relied on in any office which requires these talents."[2]

At the election in Derby in the fall of 1786, Col. Humphreys was elected a member of the Assembly. His colleague was Lieut. Samuel Hull, a brother of Col. William Hull. The state of New England, socially and politically, was very turbulent at this time. The lack

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.
[2] Jefferson's *Works*, p. 557.

of money resulting in a great measure from the exhaustion of the soil by neglect during the years of war and the deprivation of income by exports was a fertile cause of discontent. The emission of bills of credit by the several States, their depreciation in value, and the refusal, or inability, of the States to provide for their payment caused much hardship to deserving citizens.

The sad, but inevitable, consequence of this shrinkage was that men who had money owing to them were forced in self interest, and because they themselves were being pursued by their creditors, to in turn take the hardest measures to recover, if possible, the monies owing to them. The laws of debtor and creditor were stringent, but the laws could not make money. Nevertheless it was an era of litigation. The volume of this sort of business before the courts was so great that no other cases could be heard. At that time the law allowed imprisonment for debt and many a father was taken from his starving family to linger for years behind prison bars. Very forcibly is this state of affairs put by the historian of Pittsfield:

> There are many yet living who remember how their young eyes were shocked by the gaunt forms, long unkempt hair, grizzly beard, and claw-like hands of men who with sunken eyes peered from behind grated windows where they had lain for years, guilty of no worse crime than the incurring of a trifling debt, which, perhaps, some unforeseen political or commercial convulsion had rendered them unable to pay; and in 1786 not a few of these poor creatures, blue with prison mould, were those who had fought for freedom and were still largely the creditors of the country whose laws made them tenants of a debtor's "Jail."[1]

[1] *History of Pittsfield, Berkshire County Mass., from the Year 1734 to 1800.* Compiled and Written under the general direction of a Committee, by J. E. A. Smith, by Authority of the town. Boston: Published by Lee & Shepard, 149 Washington Street, 1869, p. 393.

Out of all this poverty, imprisonment, and consequent distress grew what is known as "Shays's Rebellion."

In addition to these national troubles there was the Asgill case continually cropping up which affected the private reputation of his Chief.

Humphreys therefore, according to his custom, writes fully and frankly on all these matters to Washington.

HARTFORD, Sept. 24, 1786.

MY DEAR GENERAL:—

I had the pleasure before I left New York to receive your favour containing the enclosures respecting Asgill's affair and am taking measures for their publication. Interested, as I feel myself in your welfare & happiness, I could not but be extremely affected by the account of your ill-health, and beg you will let me know in what condition your health is, as I shall not find myself at ease until I hear of its re-establishment.

Not having found in my journey Genl. Knox (who was at the eastward) or any of our particular friends, with whom I might converse unreservedly on the subject of the Cincinnati; I have delayed writing to you until I could have an opportunity of advising with Col. Trumbull, Col. Wadsworth & Mr. Trumbull, of this town. And now, I have to inform, that it is their unanimous sentiment, it would not be of any good consequence or even advisable for you to attend the next General Meeting. Agreeably to your desire in this case, I forward you the draft of a circular letter, of which you will of course, my dear General, make such use as you shall judge most expedient, either by altering, suppressing, or communicating it. I am sensible the subject is a very delicate one, that it will be discussed by posterity as well as by the present age, and that you have much to lose & nothing to gain by it in their estimation. Under this persuasion, caution was the primary point, it has consequently been the object to avoid as much as possible everything that will be obnoxious to censure on the

part of the public as well as of the Society. Whatever communication is made, it ought to have the property of a two edged weapon & to cut both ways. We have had a State meeting at New Haven since my return, in which I found there was no disposition to adopt the Institution as altered and amended. I moved therefore to postpone the discussion until after the next General Meeting, this was unanimously carried, and they appointed Gen. Parsons, Col. Wadsworth, Mr. Pomeroy, Dr. Styles (Presidt of the College) & myself their Delegates. Having learnt it was wished & expected the General Meeting would be holden in New York, I have ventured to propose that place accordingly.

As to the subject of politics, they wear so unpleasing an aspect, I hardly dare enter into a disquisition of them. You will have seen by the public papers, that everything is in a state of confusion in Massachusetts. Our friend Cobb, who is both a General of militia & a judge of the Court in the County where he resides, is much celebrated for having said "he would die as a General, or sit as a Judge." This was indeed a patriotic Sentiment.

His firmness in principles, & example in conduct effected a suppression of the mob—but the Court was adjourned in consequence of the Governor's order. I have just now seen an account of the tumults in New Hampshire; Gen. Sullivan has behaved nobly & put a period to a very considerable insurrection without the effusion of blood.

Rhode Island continues in a State of phrenzy & division on account of their paper currency. A useful example to such of their neighbours as wish to profit by it.

This State which seems rather more tranquil & better disposed than those before mentioned has had an election of representatives for the Assembly since my arrival. More gentlemen late belonging to the Army have been elected than on any former occasion. Amongst these are Gen. Huntington, Col. Wadsworth, Wyllys, Bradly, myself & many others who may be personally unknown to you. But what appears most singular & proves some revelation of sentiment, is that Major Judd, who 3 years ago was driven by an armed Mob out of

the town to which he belonged on account of commutation, should now have a seat in the Assembly from the same town.

The Assembly will sit at New Haven through the months of Octr & Novr at which place, I request you will advise me of the receipt of this letter. Col. Trumbull is in town & desires to be presented most affectionately to yourself, Mrs. Washington & the family at Mt. Vernon. For myself, having wrote a poem[1] expressive of the satisfaction, I experienced in my residence there & having since been told by some better judges than myself, it is not destitute of merit; I take the liberty of offering a Copy & wish it may be acceptable to my amiable & dear friends under your roof. They are entitled to all my gratitude for their hospitality & friendship. To you My dear Gen. I need only say that no one is more entirely & sincerely devoted than your faithful friend & hble Servt.

D. Humphreys.[2]

The October session of the Assembly was held according to the usual custom in the State House on New Haven Green. The Hon. Samuel Huntington of Norwich was the Governor. In his opening Address to the Assembly he spoke especially of the necessities of the people in the way of increased facilities for obtaining a livelihood by better methods of agriculture and the encouragement of manufactures. The subject was considered by the House on Thursday, October 12.

The *Connecticut Courant* gives this summary of the debate.

On motion of Mr. Hopkins the house entered generally into the subject of the encouragement of agriculture and manufactures. Colonel Wadsworth and Mr. Dodman spoke on the subject; in the course of which it was observed that our woollen manufactures wanted no encouragement as no wool was ex-

[1] See *Connecticut Courant*, October, 1786, also *Miscellaneous Works* of Humphreys, edition of 1804.

[2] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

ported but the whole was manufactured in the State. The example of Massachusetts was urged in encouragement of the manufacture of nails which it was asserted were made at Taunton, cheaper and of better quality than those imported. Colonel Wadsworth spoke on encouragement of manufactures especially nails which were made at large profit. Navigation and commerce need encouragement. He cited products sent to the West Indies; horses, cattle, provisions, lumber; France and Spain, fish and oil. Our Tobacco in West Indies is preferred to other kinds. On Thursday, October 17, agreeably to the order of the day, Colonel Humphreys arose, and addressed the Chair in substance as follows: Mr. Speaker, I rise to call the attention of the House to this subject which has been assigned for its consideration this morning. I mean that article in his Excellency, the Governor's speech which recommends the encouragement of agriculture and manufactures. It will be unnecessary to go over all the ground which has been trodden in the course of the former debate, or rather conversation, on these interesting topics. It appeared then, so far as we were able to collect the sentiments of the gentlemen from their cursory observations to be the unanimous sense of this house, that something ought to be done in the premises, which the collected wisdom and prejudice of the legislature could dictate and the circumstances of the State permit to be carried into execution, what that is will require all our attention, candour, and ability to investigate and decide. This may probably (after the present discussion) be best effected in a committee, which I shall therefore beg leave to move may be appointed. But since I am now upon my legs, Mr. Speaker, I wish to be indulged in making a few general observations on this important subject, especially as I have not risen before in this debate, and as I shall endeavour to express them in as concise terms as possible. This State, Sir, it is well known, is from its local situation and manner of settlement, peculiarly calculated for and favourable to agriculture. On this the wealth, the freedom and the happiness of the citizens in a great measure depend. That its cultivation is susceptible of being much improved and extended cannot be doubted. It will then

become the duty of our Committee to suggest the most efficacious means of accomplishing this desired object. To fall upon measures for increasing the quantity of hemp, flax, and wool will claim their first attention. Other branches will undoubtedly occur. And let me ask, whether fixing a real value upon our several articles of exportation by having them properly inspected, will not be a matter worthy their notice. It is, I am informed, by similar regulations, that the flour of Pennsylvania, and the Tobacco of Virginia command so good a price. It is for want of them that our produce is frequently held in contempt and sometimes suffered to perish unsold. This, a gentleman well acquainted with commercial affairs whom I do not see in his place, has told you is the case with our tobacco: this, I have been told in Philadelphia is the case with our salted provisions. As to manufacture, Sir, I will only mention two or three reflections. So long as we continue an agricultural people (and such we shall be while lands are so plenty and cheap) we cannot expect to carry our manufactures to any high degree of perfection. It is certainly worth our while, however, to promote those of nails, cordage, coarse woollens, linens, &c. But should we attempt great establishments, or finer fabrics, by procuring workmen from abroad, the moment they should have acquired a little property they will all become cultivators of the earth, so much more agreeable is that profession. To diminish our importations and augment our articles for exportation has been mentioned as a very important object, and such indeed it is. How this can be done by premiums, on one hand, and impositions on the other, will also claim your Committee's attention. After that part of our commerce which consists in the importation of foreign luxuries and superfluities had been remarked upon and justly reprobated, it was proposed that we should turn our navigation into a more useful channel, by giving encouragement to the whale and cod fisheries. The sea Sir, is an inexhaustible mine. There we have as good a claim as others. In fact we have superior advantages, could we once make a beginning, in materials for ship building, in the supply of provisions, and in a hardy adventurous race of men. Every

shilling obtained from this source would be a clear acquisition to the state. But as encouragement is necessary in the first instance, and as bounties cannot be drawn from an exhausted treasury I beg leave only to propose whether, for this and similar objects, a state lottery might not answer a good purpose. We are all here present, I hope, and presume, Mr. Speaker, with dispositions to consult, advise and determine in the most candid and harmonious manner upon whatever may tend to promote the interests of our constituents. Let us then, Sir, in the discharge of our duty to our country and our consciences make use of every resource which God and Nature have put in our hands for becoming by honesty, and economy and industry a great and respectable people.

In the debate which followed Col. Humphreys' remarks, Col. Burrall of Canaan, Mr. Hopkins of Waterbury, and his colleague Capt. John Welton took part supporting the positions taken by Col. Humphreys. As a result of Humphreys' speech a Committee "On the Encouragement of Agriculture and Manufactures" was appointed consisting of Mr. Solomon Griswold of Windsor, Col. Humphreys, Gen. Jedidiah Huntington of New London, Col. Elijah Abell of Fairfield, Col. Burrall, Mr. Ebenezer Bacon of Middletown and Capt. Daniel Ingraham of Hebron.

We see how the active mind of Humphreys even in his moments of comparative leisure was planning for the future of his country. Later on, when the public service to the nation was finished, we shall see that he was not a man of words only, but that he put into practice the counsels which he now advocated and laid the foundation of one of our great industries.

CHAPTER XIX

Tumults and Controversies of 1786

Delay of British in Surrendering Western Outposts—Disaffection of the Indians—Creation of Standing Army—Establishment of Forts among the Indians—Increase of Army Imperative—Colonel Humphreys Appointed in Command of Connecticut Regiment—Makes Hartford his Recruiting Headquarters—His Despondent Letter to Washington —Washington's Attitude—His Reply to Humphreys—Humphreys' Answer—The Asgill Case—Humphreys' Vindication of Washington in this Affair—Sends Washington Description of State of Affairs in New England—*The Anarchiad*—Its Purpose—Its Contributors—Washington Reviews the Asgill Case—His Letter to Humphreys on it.

THE course of events on the western frontier of the United States bordering on the Mississippi was watched with great anxiety by the members of Congress and the people in general. A brave and determined stand was taken by the settlers in Ohio, Kentucky and Illinois, who were desirous of making pleasant homes for themselves in the virgin forests on the rich alluvial lands. They were however exposed to many dangers.

The treaty of Paris, it is true, had made compulsory the surrender of the outposts by the British in the western country, of which the most important were Detroit and Niagara, but they delayed the transfer upon various pretexts, but principally, as they alleged, because the United States had ignored the article concerning the payment of

debts due British subjects, and the restitution of all confiscated estates of loyalists.

Among the Delawares, Shawnees, Wyandottes, Chippeways and other Indians living in the Ohio country there were still many British agents and traders. The great influence of the Six Nations extended beyond the borders of their original home in New York and their firm allegiance to the British caused the western Indians to look with a natural suspicion upon the Americans. They bitterly resented the invasion of the hunting grounds and homes in the fertile valleys of the Muskingum, Mahoning and the farther West. This hostile attitude had made it necessary for Congress to authorize a small army to be formed notwithstanding the repugnance of the people to a standing army. A regiment of seven hundred men was organized in April, 1785. The command was given to Lieutenant Josiah Harmar of Pennsylvania, a brave and experienced officer of the Revolutionary War. Col. Harmar established his headquarters at Fort Pitt, the site of the present city of Pittsburgh. Forts were built in the region beyond on the Ohio, Miami and elsewhere, the most important being Fort Washington, now Cincinnati, Fort Vincennes, and Fort Venango, and garrisons were placed in them. As need required, small detachments were sent into various parts of the country, and every endeavour made to bring the Indians into friendly relations with the United States. These small parties not only explored but also guarded the region and taught the Indians that a new and independent nation had arisen capable of enforcing its claims. Col. Harmar had found it necessary in the summer of 1786 to establish himself at the mouth of the Muskingum, where a fort was built and called after him, Fort Harmar.[1]

The Indians were evidently preparing for some hostile

[1] This was on the bank of the river opposite Marietta, where in April, 1788, the first settlement was made under the Ohio Company.

demonstration, as it was soon noticed that messengers were constantly passing between the boundaries and the Canadas. In the report to Congress written from "Fort Harmar at the mouth of the Muskingum" on August 4, 1786, the commandant says that he was trying everything in his power to conciliate the minds of the Indians, and had several of the Delawares, Chippeways, and other tribes with him at Fort M'Intosh[1] and at Fort Pitt to pay him a friendly visit.

"They have returned," he says, "well satisfied with the good treatment they have received, and I am convinced will make a very favourable report thereof to their nations on their arrival." He enclosed a report of Cadet Philip Liebert of the Artillery Corps, who had been sent as a special envoy to learn the intentions of the Indians, and had left the Fort on March 18, and traversed the Indian country, visiting the chief towns, and sitting often by the council fires, and smoking the pipe of peace. He had in every town assured the chiefs "that the thirteen great fires were determined to hold fast the chain of friendship." He had observed messengers from the Six Nations in several places and learned that they were bearers of a letter for Capt. Eliot, a well known and influential British trader and agent, and had come to invite the Western Indians "to join hands and be strong to prevent the Long Knife from taking their lands." They were painted black, and told the Shawnees they would set the example and were going to war. After the council they were joined by some of the Cherokees, and a few of the Shawnees. He noted that the Delawares and Wyandottes appeared friendly. A letter from William North from "the Camp

[1] This fort had been built by a small company from the American garrison at Fort Pitt in 1778. It was situated twenty miles north-west of Fort Pitt on the right bank of the Ohio River, and a little below the mouth of Beaver River.

at the Rapids" enclosed information from faithful Indian scouts and confidential agents. Joseph Saunders said that the Indians would be encouraged by the British "to kill the first man who attempted to survey in their country."

Major North had ascertained that the Shawnees, Mingoes, Delawares, Pottawatomies, Sacs and Cherokees "were plundering and killing all Americans in that region." The British agents were influencing the Indians who had made treaties with us "to set them upon us." They were also made to believe "that the Americans are their greatest enemies, that they are unjustly deprived of their lands, and in fact that we are a weak and contemptable nation who may be insulted with impunity." Wingo Hatton, a trusty Indian, reported the movements of the Indians and their apparent design to collect a war-party.

A second letter from Col. Harmar dated September 17, 1786, gave a report of "Captain ——, a trusty Indian" concerning the return of the several chiefs from the British at Niagara, and the councils in the Shawnees' towns. He mentions the promise of the British that three ships laden with goods were to be sent by way of the Great Lakes for the Indians. He had ascertained that it had been determined "to take up the hatchet against the Long Knife," and that one thousand warriors were assembling to march in three bands against Forts Harmar, Wheeling, and Miami.[1]

Col. Harmar's dispatches and other communications from the war-office were referred to a special committee, Mr. Pettit, Mr. Lee, Mr. Pinckney, Mr. Henry, and Mr. Smith.

[1] This abstract of the condition of Indian affairs is taken from a copy of Col. Harmar's dispatches officially attested by Charles Thompson, Secretary of Congress, under date of October 20, 1788. It was published in the *Connecticut Courant*, Monday, November 6, 1788, No, 1137.

In a report made by this committee on Friday, October 20th, it was said that there was "the strongest reason to believe that unless the speediest measures are taken effectually to counteract and defeat this plan, the war will become general and be attended with the most dangerous and lasting consequences."

The Committee recommended that "the troops in the service of the United States be immediately augmented, not only for the protection and support of the frontiers of the States bordering on the Mississippi but to establish the possession and facilitate the survey and settling of those intermediate lands which have been so much relied on for the reduction of the debts of the United States."

A resolution was appended that thirteen hundred and forty non-commissioned officers and men be enlisted for the term of three years. The quotas for the New England States were:

New Hampshire	200
Massachusetts	660
Rhode Island	120
Connecticut	180[1]

Upon this requisition of Congress the General Assembly of Connecticut acted promptly and made these appointments:

Colonel David Humphreys to be Commandant of the regiment; Captains—Lemuel Clift, John Buell, Peter Robinson, John Throop; Lieutenants—John Jeffries, Jeremiah Keeler, Edward Miller; Surgeon's Mate—Dr. Eneas Munson, Jr.[2]

Colonel Humphreys selected Hartford "as the rendezvous for the recruits to be raised in this State."[3]

[1] *Journals of Congress*, 1785–1786. Printed by John Dunlap.
[2] The *Connecticut Courant*, Monday, November 13, 1786, No. 1138.
[3] *Ibid.*

Col. Humphreys actively commenced his new duties. He wrote from New Haven to General Washington, referring to his previous letter concerning the attendance of the General at the next General Meeting of the Cincinnati, and with the natural irritation of a soldier comments on the supineness of the civil authorities in the present crisis both on the frontiers and in Massachusetts. This letter throws a lucid light on the miserable state of affairs in America, and shows how keenly Washington's comrades felt the disgrace inflicted on their commander in that they actually had in contemplation the withdrawal of Washington to Europe. It would be interesting to know where they would have advised him to take shelter—in England or France?

New Haven, Nov. 1st 1786.

My dear General,

I wrote your Excellency some time ago from Hartford & enclosed you the draft of a letter on the subject we talked of when I left Mount Vernon. I hope you have duly received it, tho' I shall not be free from anxiety until I know with certainty that has been the case.

When I wrote that letter I was in hopes that it might have been in my power before this time, to give you a favourable account, of the complexion of politics in this State. It is true we have done some negative good—we have prevented an emission of Paper Money and Tender Acts from taking place: But I am sorry to say we have done nothing in aid of the federal Government. The only Requisition of Congress we have complied with is a recent one for raising Troops on account of an Indian conjecture for other purposes. The Assembly has this day given me the Command of a Regt part to be raised in this State & a part in the other New England States. I have been advised by our friends to accept it for the present, which I shall accordingly do.—

The troubles in Massachusetts still continue. Government is prostrated in the dust. And it is much to be feared that

there is not energy enough in that State to re-establish the Civil Powers. The leaders of the Mob, whose fortune & measures are desperate, are strengthening themselves daily & it is expected that they will soon take possession of the Continental Magazine at Springfield: in which there are from ten to fifteen thousand stand of Arms in excellent order.

A general want of compliance with the requisitions of Congress for money seems to prognosticate that we are rapidly advancing to a Crisis. The wheels of the great political Machine can scarcely continue to move much longer under their present embarrassment. Congress I am told are seriously alarmed, & hardly know which way to turn or what to expect. Indeed, my dear General, nothing but a good Providence can extricate us from our present difficulties & prevent some terrible convulsion.

In case of civil discord, I have already told you it was seriously in my opinion, that you could not remain neuter—and that you would be obliged, in self defence, to take part on one side or the other: or withdraw from the Continent. Your friends are of the same opinion and I believe you are convinced that it is impossible to have more disinterested & zealous friends than those who have been about your person.

I write with the more confidence, as this letter will be delivered by Mr. Austin & Mr. Morse, two young Clergymen educated at this University who are travelling to the southern part of the Union, for the sake of acquiring knowledge of their own Country. I beg leave to recommend them to your Civilities & to assure you in offering my best respects to Mrs. Washington & the family, how sincerely I am My dear Gen your friend & Hble Servt.

D. Humphreys.

Gen. Washington.[1]

Amid all the contention and strife over office, the incapacity of Congress, and the general discontent, Washington had studiously refrained from influencing action in

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

any public or marked manner. He was too great to show to strangers his chagrin or to wear his heart on his sleeve. He, like Cincinnatus of old, played the part of the country squire. He looked after his plantations, he elaborated plans for the improvement of the Potomac, he mapped out how canals might bring the produce of the western lands and incidentally open up large tracts for settlement and cultivation. Then again he busied himself with his correspondence, answering the letters which came to him, mostly from strangers. He was too true a Virginian not to be an admirable host, and thus he lived outwardly the life of a country gentleman, though his heart was with the interests of the nation he had founded. The few who knew the real worth of the man were in despair. They wanted him at the helm. The opinion of the General's old friends and associates that a crisis had come is expressed by Col. Humphreys in his letter of the first of November.

Outwardly, Washington was the country squire, but from his eagle's nest at Mount Vernon he was keenly alert to everything. He was deeply stirred by the contents of Humphreys' letter of the 24th of September, and replied without loss of time.

My D^{r} Humphreys,

Your favour of the 24th ulto. came to my hand about the middle of this month. For the enclosures it contained I pray you to receive my warmest acknowledgement & thanks.

The Poem, tho' I profess not to be a connoiseur in these kind of writings, appears pretty in my eye, & has sentiments & elegance which must I think render it pleasant to others.

With respects to the circular letter, I see no cause for suppressing or altering any part of it except as to the place of meeting. Philadelphia, on three accounts, in my opinion must be more convenient to the majority of the delegation, than New York—1st, as most central, 2nd, because there are regu-

larly established packet boats well accomodated for Passengers, to it from the Southern States; & 3rdly, because it appears to me that the seat of Congress would not be so well for this meeting. When you have digested your thoughts for publication in the case of Captn. Asgill I would thank you for a copy of them; having arrested the account I furnished Mr. Tilghman, with an assurance of a more authentic one for his friend in England.

I am pleased with the choice of Delegates which was made at your State meeting, & wish the Representatives of all the States societies may appear at the Genl. Meeting, with as good disposition as I believe they will. It gives me pleasure also to hear that so many Officers are sent to your Assembly: I am persuaded they will carry with them more liberality of sentiment than is to be found among any other class of Citizens.

The speech of our friend Cobb was noble, worthy of such a patriot as himself; as was the conduct of Genl. Sullivan. But for God's sake tell me what is the cause of all these commotions; do they proceed from licentiousness, British influence disseminated by the Tories, or real grievances which admit of redress? If the latter why were they delayed 'till the public mind has become so much agitated? If the former why are not the powers of Government tried at once? It is as well to live without, as not to be under their exercise. Commotions of this sort, like snow balls gather strength as they roll, if there is no opposition in the way to divide & crumble them—

Do write me fully, I beseech you, on these matters; not only with respect to facts, but as to opinions of their tendency & issue—I am mortified beyond expression that in the moment of our acknowledged independence we should by our conduct verify the predictions of our transatlantic foe, & render ourselves ridiculous & contemptible in the eyes of all Europe. My health (I thank you for the inquiry) is restored to me; & all under this roof join me in most affectionate regards & in regretting that your letter has held out no idea of visiting it again this winter, as you gave us hope of doing when you left us.

To all the Gentn of my acquaintance who may happen to be in your circle, I beg to be remembered with sincere regard. To assure you of the sincerity of my friendship for you, would be unnecessary as you must, I think, be perfectly satisfied of the high esteem and affection with which,

I am &c. &c.

Gº Washington.

Mount Vernon
22d Octor 1786.[1]

Humphreys' reply to this passionate appeal is as follows:

New Haven, Nov. 9th, 1786.

My dear General,

I have this moment been honoured with your letter of the 22nd of Octr. I am thereby relieved from some anxiety for fear mine of the 24 of September had miscarried. For the reasons you mention, I think it will be best that the General Meeting of the Cincinnati should be holden at Philadelphia. I am happy that the enclosures have met with your approbation.

A few days ago I addressed a letter to you by Messrs. Morse & Austin. The latter has since concluded not to go Southward. By the former I expect still to have an opportunity of forwarding this. Having been pressed in time & not having kept any copy I can hardly recollect distinctly what I have written in the letter before referred to.

I only remember that I had been much mortified by the ignorance & perverseness of some of the leading members, or Demagogues, in our Assembly; and that I gave no very favourable picture of our situation or prospects. As to your question, my dear General, respecting the cause and origin of those commotions; I hardly find myself in condition to give a certain answer. If from all the information I have been able to obtain, I might be authorized to hazard an opinion I should attribute them to three causes which you have suggested. In Massachusetts particularly I believe there are a few real grievances: and also some wicked agents, or emissaries,

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

who have been busy in magnifying the positive evils; & fomenting causeless jealousies & disturbances, but it rather appears to me that there is a licentious spirit prevailing among many of the people; a levelling principle; a desire of change; & a wish to annihilate all debts public & private. The Assembly of that State are occupied in removing all the real subjects of hardship & complaint. They have likewise passed a new Riot Act, & given some indication of spirit in support of Government.

But still the preparations & systematic arrangements on the part of the Mob do not cease.

You will have seen by the speech of Mr. King before that Legislature that Congress consider themselves as the Guarantee of each State of Government & bound to interfere in its support under certain circumstances.

I refer you to Mr. Morse the bearer of this for particulars[1] concerning this State—I will send by the next Post the papers respecting Asgill. Tho' I shall not see Mt. Vernon this winter my affections are centred there, being in sincerity your most zealous friend & humble Servant,

D. Humphreys.[2]

Col. Humphreys' vindication of Washington from the malicious gossip in America and Europe and the erroneous statements that had been printed respecting his treatment of Captain Asgill appeared in the issue of *The New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine* for Thursday, November 16, 1786, under the title: "The conduct of General Washington Respecting the Confinement of Captain Asgill placed in the true Point of Light."

In a prefatory statement Humphreys says: "When I

[1] Mr. Morse afterwards became well known as an estimable clergyman of Cambridge, Mass., the author of the first American Geography, as well as other books. To the present generation he is known as the father of Samuel F. B. Morse who applied to practical use the magnetic telegraph.

[2] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

was in England last Winter, I heard suggestions that the treatment Captain Asgill experienced during his confinement was unnecessarily rigorous, and as such reflected discredit upon Americans."

He proceeds to state that his membership in the General's family and knowledge of the minutest circumstance of that unpleasant affair enable him to deny that there was a particle of veracity in those illiberal suggestions.

When he was at Mt. Vernon he continues, "this summer the subject was mentioned to the General," who showed him a communication from London addressed to Col. Tilghman which arrived just after his death, and also the reply made by Washington. He had, he says, received from Washington transcripts of "all the original letters and orders respecting Capt. Asgill" and also copies of the letters of Mr. Tilghman and Washington. He states that it is solely from a wish that "the circulation of truth should be co-extensive with falsehoods which may be placed in a true point of view before the eye of the present age and even of posterity" that without consulting any one he charges himself with their publication. The documents included "the post script to a letter from James Tilghman Esqr. to his Excellency General Washington, May 26, 1786," General Washington's answer, "Mount Vernon, June 5, 1786," and the official letters, orders and other documents. They amply refute the charge and show that the young captain was treated with great leniency considering he was under sentence of death until satisfaction was given for the murder of Captain Huddy.[1]

Copies of the *Gazette* with the "Vindication" were sent immediately to Gen. Washington by Col. Humphreys, accompanied by this frank and straightforward letter:

[1] The "Vindication" was reprinted in the *Columbian Magazine* for January and February, 1787, pp. 205–209, 233, 235. Also reprinted by the Holland Club of New York, with a preface and appendix, 1859.

New Haven, Nov. 16, 1786.

My dear General,

I have written you twice within these few days, and agreeably to the promise in my last, I have now the honour of enclosing papers containing the state of facts respecting Capt. Asgill's confinement. I have no fear but that the truth will become generally known.

I hope it is digested & printed in a manner that will be acceptable to you. I would have sent you several of the late papers from the same press, which contained performances written by Mr. Trumbull, Mr. Barlow, & myself, in a style & manner, I believe somewhat superior to common newspaper publications: but the demand has been so uncommonly great for those papers that there is not a single one to be obtained. In some instances the force of ridicule has been found of more efficacy than the force of argument, against the Anti-federalists & Advocates for Mobs & Conventions. It was pleasant enough to observe how some leading Men, of erroneous politics, were stung to the soul by shafts of satire. I perceive Sir Guy Carleton, who is made Lord Dorchester, has just arrived in Canada, with Billy Smith for Chief Justice of that Province: this, does not appear to forbode any great good to us. It continues to be suggested in conversation & print, that Emissaries are employed to scatter the seeds of discord among the citizens of the United States. Tho' I do not think the British too virtuous or liberal for such conduct, I cannot say I have sufficient evidence to convince me that their Cabinet has adopted that system; it is not improbable, however, that officious individuals while they gratified their own private revenge, should have thought this work would not be disagreeable to their Government even if unsanctified by it.

The Assembly of Massachusetts seem disposed to redress all the real & even pretended grievances under which their Constituents are supposed to labour; after which it is hoped & expected they will adopt a line of conduct pointedly vigorous & decided. On the strength of this expectation, or something else, the Governor already talks very big.

I am informed that Gen. Harry Jackson is appointed Commandant of the Continental Regt. to be raised in that State, & that Gibbs is appointed one of the Majors. I have not heard who are subjects of other appointments.

The Rendezvous of my Regt. is at Hartford, where I may probably be the greater part of the Winter. Tho' I shall not have the facility of eating Christmas pies at Mount Vernon, I hope & trust my former exploits in that way will not be forgotten. To the two Mrs. Washingtons, to my friends the Major & Mrs. Lear, be pleased to present me affectionately. At one time, or another, I hope to have the satisfaction of testifying personally, how much & how ardently I have the honour to be

Your sincere friend & Humble Servant,
D. Humphreys.[1]

Tumults and controversies created a widespread feeling of unrest. The change of political sentiment, the arguments over the rights of the people and the supremacy of each individual State, the retention by the authorities of all power in face of the express terms of the Articles of Confederation, were distressing to all right minded men who desired a stable and strong government. Notwithstanding the fact that Congress had in it men of ability, yet its power was waning daily. No State paid the slightest heed to any recommendations unless they coincided with its wishes. Very frequently, when it was desired to take action in Congress upon important subjects, there would not be enough States represented to enable the measure to be passed. The cause of the Federalists, as even then those who desired a central controlling power were called, might, it was thought, be helped by its partisans by squibs and broadsides. The evident tendency to "conventions and mobs" might be counteracted, it was hoped, by these means. This idea

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

came from the fertile mind of Humphreys, who while in England the previous winter had been a witness to the success of the *Rolliad* to which Fox, Sheridan, and the other wits of the day had contributed. The constant attacks upon the Cincinnati cut Humphreys to the quick, and this, more than any other cause, impelled him to be revenged on its detractors.

The Anarchiad made its appearance, its title being a fitting one, even if thought by many to be too satirical. *The Anarchiad, A Poem on the Restoration of Chaos and Substantial Right*, was its full title. The various portions were alleged to be extracts from a long epic poem, with that title, found in one of the prehistoric mounds of the Ohio valley, which were then attracting the popular attention. The first number appeared in the New Haven *Gazette* of October 26, 1786, under the title of "American Antiquities No. 1," and was extensively copied. It at once attracted attention and was read by men of all political parties. It is to this article that Humphreys alluded in the letter to Washington, which has just been given, when he says, "I would have sent several of the late papers &c." These essays were continued until twelve numbers had been issued, the last appearing September 13, 1787, in the New Haven *Gazette*. The "Hartford Wits" however still continued to sting their opponents by a succession of squibs, letters and essays. In comparing *The Anarchiad* with the acknowledged writings of Humphreys there is found to be a singular similarity of thought and expression. While it cannot be said how many, or which, came from the pen of Humphreys yet it may be safely assumed that the majority of the papers were his. Trumbull and Barlow were, as he tells Washington, his collaborateurs. John Trumbull was a son of the Rev. John Trumbull, pastor of the first Church in Westbury, a district of Waterbury, and now Watertown. He grad-

uated from Yale in 1771. With Timothy Dwight he was made a tutor in Yale, in 1771. He formed an intimate friendship with David Humphreys.[1]

Joel Barlow, the other "collaborateur" to *The Anarchiad*, was a native of Redding, Connecticut, being the youngest of ten children. He graduated at Yale in 1778. There he made the friendship of Humphreys, who, as we have already seen, endeavoured to obtain for him a chaplaincy in the army.

While Mr. Barlow was in the army Humphreys was able to aid his friend socially by introducing him to the Commander-in-Chief, General Greene, and other officers of high rank. The inactivity of the army at that time allowed him to work upon his great poem *The Vision of Columbus*. Portions of it were read in manuscript at headquarters by Col. Humphreys and were highly praised. After the war Barlow returned to Hartford and continued the study of law, and was admitted to the Bar in 1785. He also opened a printing office, from which he issued *The Mercury*. In this periodical, which had a comparatively wide circulation, many of his poems and those of his friends appeared. *The Vision of Columbus* was published in the spring of 1787, and at once sprang into popularity. Mr. Barlow had the honour of delivering before the Connecticut Society of the Cincinnati the first of the annual orations, on July 4, 1787, in the Centre Church in Hartford. At the request of some of his

[1] Trumbull's most successful attempt in mock heroic is *McFingal*, written early in the Revolution and which was widely read by all classes. He studied law, was admitted to the Bar in 1773, and gained distinction in his profession. *McFingal* was published in 1781, and in 1786 he was one of the small but brilliant company of men who were known as the "Hartford Wits." In 1800 he became a member of the General Assembly, and in 1808 was appointed Judge of the Supreme Court of Errors. He remained on the bench until 1819, when his bodily infirmities made his retirement from public life necessary. In 1825 he went to Detroit making his home with his daughter, Mrs. Woodbridge, and died there in May, 1831.

brethren in the congregation, he undertook in connection with Dr. Hopkins and Judge Trumbull a revision of *Watts' Psalms*. In this work while improving the versification he took great liberties with the text of the evangelical divine; also translating several of the psalms which had been omitted by the original compiler. In his *Diary*, President Stiles gives an elaborate criticism of the book, in the course of which he says: "I think he has corrected too much, and unnecessarily hurt the poetry."[1]

Mr. Barlow's epic poem had given him a reputation in Europe. He accepted the offer of the Scioto Company, composed of New York capitalists and politicians, of whom Col. Duer was the chief, to represent it in France and induce French officers and others to settle upon their tract of land which adjoined that of the Ohio Company in the North-West Territory. Mr. Barlow remained abroad for many years, consorting with literary and political leaders and engaging in some successful business ventures. He wore the liberty cap, made friends among the people, was affectionately greeted by the Republicans, and became a member of the Constituent Assembly. The good offices of Col. Humphreys were exerted for his friend among his European acquaintances, and helped Mr. Barlow greatly in his career there. Subsequent incidents in his life will be given later on.

Some literary histories, without much warrant, add Dr. Lemuel Hopkins to those already mentioned as contributors to *The Anarchiad*. Many of these historians, however, have not studied the matter at first hand, as is evident from the fact that one of them leaves out all mention of Humphreys as one of the writers of these satires.[2]

Dr. Lemuel Hopkins, to whom is ascribed this honour, was a native of Waterbury, the son of a wealthy farmer.

[1] President Stiles's *Diary*, ii., p. 156.

[2] Mr. J. W. Barber, in his *Connecticut Historical Collections*, see p. 267.

He studied under a skilful physician in Wallingford, practised a short time in Litchfield and then entered the army as a volunteer. At the conclusion of peace, he settled in Hartford where he established a large practice, for he was a "physician of great skill and reputation." The doctor was possessed of a lively imagination, a keen sense of the ludicrous, and found opportunity for the cultivation of his literary tastes. He was a strong Federalist and gave his political opponents many hard blows in prose and verse.

He was associated with Richard Alsop of Middletown in writing *The Echo*, *The Political Greenhouse*, and other versified political pamphlets and in the enjoyment of the pleasant society of such men as Col. Wadsworth, his fellow poets, and others who made this dignified and charming old Connecticut town a centre of literature and learning, where he passed the remainder of his life. That he wrote no part of *The Anarchiad* cannot positively be said.

The probability is that his share was the smallest of the four "Wits," Humphreys, Trumbull, Barlow, and Hopkins. That he was the chief writer is abundantly disproved by the Humphreys correspondence.

The Anarchiad more than served its turn. It did much to hearten the supporters of good government and to render the views of its opponents ridiculous.

As Humphreys truly said to Washington, "Pointed ridicule is found to be of more efficacy than serious argumentation."

The gross injustice that had been done to the character of Washington by misrepresentations of his attitude toward the unfortunate Capt. Charles Asgill had aroused the indignation of his friend. Humphreys desired that the fair fame of the Commander-in-Chief should not be tarnished. At his request the papers concerning the imprisonment of the young British officer were carefully

gone over, and copies made. After he had left Mount Vernon they were sent to him with this letter:

MOUNT VERNON,
1 September 1786.

MY DEAR HUMPHREYS:—

Enclosed are all the documents Mr. Lear could find respecting the confinement and treatment under it of Captain Asgill. For want of recurrence to them before I wrote Mr. Tilghman, I perceive that a bad memory has run me into an error in my narrative of the latter in one particular. For it should seem by that as if the loose and unguarded manner in which Captain Asgill was held was sanctioned by me; whereas one of my letters to Colonel Dayton condemns this conduct, and orders Asgill to be closely confined. Mr. Lear has given all the letters at length, extracts might have answered, but I judged it better that the whole tenor of the correspondence should appear that no part might seem to be hidden.

I well remember Major Gordon's attending Asgill; and by one of my letters to Dayton it is evident that Gordon had written to me, but my letter books have registered no reply. In what manner it would be best to bring the matter before the public I am at a loss and leave it to you to determine under a consideration of the circumstances which are as fully communicated as the documents in my hands will enable me to do. There is one mystery in the business which I cannot develope nor are there any papers in my possession which explain it. Hazen was ordered to send an unconditional prisoner. Asgill comes; Hazen or some other must have given information of a Lieutenant Turner (under the former description), Turner is ordered on, but never came. Why? I am unable to say; nor is there any letter from Hazen (to be found) which accounts for a non-compliance with the order. If I had not too many causes to mistrust my memory, I should ascribe it to there having been no such officer, or that he was also under capitulation, for Captain Schaach[1] seems to have been held as a proper victim after this.

[1] Note in Ford's *Washington*, ix, p. 61: "Probably an error of the transcriber for Asgill."

I will write as soon as I am able to Mr. Tilghman, requesting him to withhold my first accounts of Asgill's treatment from his correspondent in England, promising him an authentic one from original papers. It may, however, have passed him. In that case it will be necessary for me to say something to reconcile my own accounts.

I write you with a very aching head and disordered frame, and Mr. Lear will copy the letter. Saturday last, by an imprudent act I brought on the ague and fever on Sunday, which returned with violence Tuesday and Thursday; and if Dr. Craik's efforts are ineffectual I shall have them again this day.

The family join me in every good wish for you. It is unnecessary to assure you of the friendship and affection with which I am &c.

P. S. We have found Gordon's letters. They contain a demand of Asgill; as an officer protected by the capitulation of Yorktown. This I suppose is the reason they were not answered.[1]

[1] Ford's *Washington*, xi., pp. 60, 61, 1785–1790. Also Sparks's *Washington*, ix., pp. 196, 197.

CHAPTER XX

Shays's Rebellion

The Winter of 1786—Humphreys' "Vindication" in the Asgill Case Commended by Washington—Humphreys' Reply—Sends Washington Full Description of State of Affairs in New England—And on the Proposed Convention—Advises Washington not to Attend it—States his Reasons—Refers Again to the *Anarchiad* Papers—Prompt Action of Gen. Lincoln and Governor Bowdoin Quells the Shays Rebellion—Details Given by Humphreys to Washington—Humphreys Marches with his Regiment to Springfield—Further Describes the Situation to Washington—Annapolis Convention—Convention at Philadelphia Recommended—Humphreys Writes thereon to Washington—He Again Advises Washington not to Attend it—In a Subsequent Letter Modifies his Views somewhat Owing to the Plan of a Convention Having Been Sanctioned by Congress—Intimates his Desire to Retire into Private Life and Marry—Humphreys Issues his Regimental Orders on the Disbanding of his Regiment at Springfield.

THE outlook in the winter of 1786 was indeed gloomy. It is true that the advices from the Indian posts were more favourable than had been anticipated, and this relieved the situation somewhat and enabled men to turn their undivided attention to the Eastern States. Here the tumults and disorders had culminated in violence. Shays's Rebellion was growing apace, the insurgents were terrorizing the people of Massachusetts, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter," and demanding immediate redress of their real, or fancied, wrongs. Hence the need of troops to protect United States property was hourly

growing more urgent. Colonel Humphreys, therefore, was actively engaged in filling up his regiment to its full quota, and held himself in readiness to proceed to Springfield, where a United States Armory with ten thousand stand of arms had been established.

In the intervals of his military work he employed himself in poetical diversions and in watching carefully the political signs of the times.

The unreasoning dislike to the Cincinnati, and his firm allegiance to that institution, his opposition to all who sought in any way to impair the usefulness or impugn the motives of its members is shown in his correspondence with Washington. In the excited state of public feeling and the failure of the Articles of Confederation to be a real bond of union there was still much hesitation on the part of the companions in arms of Washington in assenting to the plan of a convention for revision of the Articles of Confederation or the drafting of a new Constitution. They were afraid that the present disturbers of the public peace and those who did not regard as essential any central power would gain the majority in such an assembly. They did not desire that the General should have imputed to him motives of ambition or self-seeking. His reputation was dear to them and they gave him the advice they thought best adapted to the present crisis. The decisive opinion of his friends Col. Humphreys voiced in his letter of November 1, 1786, concerning the attitude which Washington ought to take, is referred to in the General's letter written in December of the same year.

My Dr. Humphreys,

I am much indebted to you for your several favours of the 1st, 9th & 16th of Novr. the last came first. Mr. Morse having in mind the old proverb, was determined not to make more haste than good speed in prosecuting his journey to Georgia, so I get the two first lately.

For your publication respecting the treatment of Captn. Asgill I am exceeding obliged to you. The manner of making it is the best that could be devised; whilst the matter will prove the illiberality, as well as fallacy of the reports which have been circulated on that occasion, & which are fathered upon that officer as the author—

It is with the deepest & most heartfelt concern I perceive by some late paragraphs extracted from the Boston Papers that the Insurgents of Massachusetts far from being satisfied with the redress offered by their general Court, are still acting in open violation of law & government, & having obliged the chief Magistrate in a decided tone to call upon the Militia of the State to support the Constitution. What, gracious God, is Man! that there should be such inconsistency & perfidiousness in his conduct? It is but the other day that we were shedding our blood to obtain the Constitutions under which we now live. Constitutions of our own choice & making & now we are unsheathing the sword to overturn them. The thing is so unaccountable that I hardly know how to realize it, or to persuade myself that I am not under the illusion of a dream.

My mind previous to the receipt of your letter of the 1st ulto had often been agitated by a thought similar to the one you have expressed respecting an old friend of yours; but heaven forbid that a crisis should come when he shall be driven to the necessity of making choice of either of the alternatives there mentioned.[1] Let me entreat you, my Dr. Sir, to keep me advised of the situation of Affairs in your quarter. I can depend upon your accounts; Newspaper paragraphs unsupported by other testimony, are often contradictory and bewildering. At one time these insurgents are spoken of as a mere mob—at other times as systematic in all their proceedings. If the first, I would fain hope that like other Mobs it will, however formidable, be of short duration. If the latter, there are surely men of consequence & abilities behind the curtain

[1] Washington here refers to the statement in Humphreys' letter of November 1st, that, in case of civil discord, Washington would have "to take part on one side or the other: or withdraw from the continent." See p. 374.

who move the puppets; the designs of whom may be deep & dangerous. They may be instigated by British counsel, actuated by ambitious motives, or being influenced by dishonest principles, had rather see the country in the horror of civil discord, than do what justice would dictate to an honest mind.

I had scarcely dispatched my circular letters to the several State Societies of the Cincinnati, when I received letters from some of the principal members of our Assembly expressing a wish that they might be permitted to name me as one of the Deputies of this State to the Convention proposed to be held at Philadelphia the first of May next. I immediately wrote to my particular friend Mr. Madison (& gave similar reasons to the others) the answer is contained in the extract No. 1. in reply I got the extract No. 2. This obliged me to be more explicit & confidential with him on points which a recurrence to the conversations we have had on this subject will bring to your mind & save me the hazard of a recital of it in this letter.

Since this interchange of letters I have received from the Governor the letter No. 4 & have written No. 5. in answer to it. Should this matter be further pressed (which I hope it will not, as I have no inclination to go), what had I best do? You, as an indifferent person, and one who is much better acquainted with the sentiments & views of the Cincinnati than I am; for in this State where the recommendations of the Genl. Meeting have been agreed to hardly anything is said about it, as also of the temper of the people & state of politics at large, can determine upon better ground and fuller evidence than myself; especially as you have opportunities of knowing in what light the States to the Eastward consider the convention; & the measures they are pursuing to contravene or to give efficiency to it. On the last occasion, only five States were represented—none East of New York.

Why the New England Governments did not appear, I am yet to learn for of all others the distractions & turbulent tempers of these people would, I should have thought, have afforded the strongest evidence of the necessity of competent powers somewhere. That the Federal Government is nearly, if not

quite, at a stand, none will deny—the first question then is, shall it be annihilated or supported? If the latter, the proposed convention is an object of the first magnitude, & should be supported by all the friends of the present Constitution. In the other case, if on a full and dispassionate revision thereof, the continuance shall be adjudged impracticable, or unwise, as only delaying an event which must ere long take place would it not be better for such a Meeting to suggest some other to avoid if possible civil discord or other impending evils? I must candidly confess as we could not remain quiet more than three or four years (in time of peace) under the Constitutions of our choosing; which it was believed in many States at least, were formed with deliberation and wisdom, I see little prospect either of our agreeing upon any other or that we should remain long satisfied under it if we could. Yet I would wish anything and everything essayed to avert the effusion of blood, & to avert the humiliating & contemptible figure we are about to make in the annals of mankind.

If this second attempt to convene the States for the purposes proposed by the report of the partial representation at Annapolis in September, should also prove abortive, it may be considered as an unequivocal evidence that the States are not likely to agree on any general measure which is to pervade the union, & of course that there is an end of Federal Government. The States therefore which make the last dying essay to avoid these misfortunes, would be mortified at the issue, & their deputies would return home chagrined at their ill success & disappointment.

This would be a disagreeable circumstance for any one of them to be in but more particularly so for a person in my situation. If no further application is made to me, of course I do not attend; if there is, I am under no obligation to do it, but as I have had so many proofs of your friendship, know your abilities to judge and your opportunities of learning the politics of the day on the points I have enumerated, you would oblige me by a full & confidential communication of your sentiments thereon.

Peace & tranquility prevail in this State. The Assembly

by a very great majority, & in very emphatical terms have rejected an application for paper money, & spurned the idea of fixing the value of military Certificates by a scale of depreciation. In some other respects too the proceedings of the present session have been marked with justice & a strong desire of supporting the federal system. Altho' I lament the effect, I am pleased at the cause which has deprived us of the pleasure of your aid in the attack of Christmas pies:—we had one yesterday on which all the company tho' pretty numerous, were hardly able to make an impression.

Mrs. Washington & George & his wife (Mr. Lear I had occasion to send to the Western Country) join in affecte: regards for you, and with sentiments of the warmest friendship, I am &c., &c.

Gº Washington.

Mount Vernon 26th Decr. 1786.[1]

In his reply, written from New Haven on January 20, 1787, Col. Humphreys not only answers the questions asked but gives a proof of his real affection for Gen. Washington by commenting at length upon the political situation and its remedy. His unselfish frankness shows how true was his devotion to his friend and chief.

New Haven, Jany 20, 1787.

(Private)

My dear General,

I am indeed much flattered by the private and confidential communications contained in your favour of the 26th of Dec.

I trust, on the present critical & momentous occasion, by disclosing the very sentiments of my soul without reservation; I shall not render myself less deserving of your confidence or worthy a place in your friendship.

As Colonel Wadsworth will be the bearer of this, I shall not be so minute in detailing the state of affairs in this quarter of the Union, as might otherwise have been requisite. He is

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

so well acquainted with the feelings & politics that I shall principally refer you to him.

So near the scene of tumult as I have been, accounts are different concerning the respectability or contemptability of the persons & numbers who compose the mob.

It seems next Tuesday (the 23) is fixed upon to produce some decision respecting the force in favour, or opposition to Government. The Court is then to sit at Worcester. The executive has ordered our 4000 Militia to support the Court & to be embodied thirty days—Liberal private subscriptions have been made to facilitate the expedition—Generals Lincoln & Sheppard are to command. It is said, if the Insurgents should not appear, the force in arms is to progress Westward, apprehend the Leaders, and assist in re-establishing Government. This may bring matters to serious extremities—I think it a good plan, unless by its secrecy it should too much resemble another Penobscot expedition.

I have lately had an opportunity of conversing with several of the first characters from the neighbouring States. These Gentlemen, viz; Messrs. Duane, Chancellor Livingston, Egbert Benson, Judges Yates, King & Smith from New York with Messrs. Lowel, King, Parsons & Judge Sullivan from Boston, were Commissioners for setting the boundaries between the Two States. They seemed to be all of opinion that something must be done, but what that something was appeared to baffle their deepest penetration. It is however, worthy remark that Mr. King, Mr. Sedgwick & several others (I believe I might say John Jay) who have been mortally opposed to the Cincinnati, now look with considerable confidence to that quarter for our political preservation.

As to a Convention, it has not until lately engrossed but little share in the conversation here. I am induced to expect the only good it can do will be to demonstrate to the People that a number of characters in whom they repose confidence, believe seriously we cannot remain as a nation much longer, in the present manner of administering our actual Government. The evil appears to me to consist more of the intowardly dispositions of the States (who make no hesitation

in palpably violating the Confederacy whenever it suits their interests), rather than in the form of our national Compact as it exists on paper. What is to be done to cure these dispositions? We may have what forms we please, but without co-ertion, they are idle as the wind. Now let us enquire what effect may probably be produced from the Convention. In the first place there is a strong diversity of sentiment respecting the legality & expediency of such a Meeting. Those who are opposed to the measure say there cannot be a full representation of the People for revising the Confederation, because the freemen at large have not been consulted in any instance; and because the Legislatures who appoint Deputies, are not authorized by their Constituents to make such appointment. Others suppose a Convention to be an interference with, if not an usurpation of the functions of Congress, and that if any recommendations are to go to the People, they should originate with Congress. But neither of these is the reason why those members of our Assembly who are perfectly federal in their policy did not urge that the subject should have been taken up & an appointment made. The reason was, a conviction that the persons who would be elected, were some of the most antifederal men in the State who believe or act as if they believed that Congress is already possessed of too unlimited powers and who would wish apparently to see the Union dissolved. These Demagogues really affect to persuade the people (to use their own phraseology) that they are only in danger of having their liberties stolen away by an artful designing Aristocracy. This jealousy, I presume, exists in some other Governments. I do not learn that Commissioners have been appointed from any of the New England States. Some of the Assemblies will not convene before May, unless called on an extraordinary emergency. So that it is almost certain that the Convention will be but partial in point of representation. But should it be compleat and should the members be unanimous in recommending in the most forcible, the most glowing, the most pathetic terms, which language can afford that it is indispensable to the salvation of the Country, Congress should be cloathed with more ample powers.—

I am, as confident as I am of my own existence, the States will not all comply with the recommendation. They have a mortal reluctance to divest themselves of the smallest attribute of independent separate Sovereignty. The personal character of yourself and some other Gentlemen would have a weight on individuals—but on democratic Assemblies & the bulk of the People, your opinions & your eloquence would be triffles light as air. After the abominable neglects, with which your recommendations of the Army have been treated, he must indeed have faith to remove mountains who can believe in good dispositions of the Country. We are already nearly ruined by believing that the Citizens of the United States were better than the rest of the world; and that they could be managed in Society without compulsion.

In effect, I conceive, that, if the Confederation should not meet with a speedy disolution, Congress must & will gradually & imperceptably acquire the habits & the means of enforcing their decisions—But if the people have not wisdom, or virtue enough, to govern themselves, or what is the same thing to suffer themselves to be governed by men of their own election why then I must think it is in vain to struggle against the torrent, it is in vain to strive to compel mankind to be happy & free contrary to their inclination. The mobility in that case or rather their jealous & factious Leaders will produce a crisis of a different nature, All that Patriots & good men can do, will be to wait events, to foresee as far as may be, & make the best of them.

I have dilated thus largely on the general subject to show that I concur fully in sentiment with you, concerning the inexpediency of your attending the Convention. This is also the decided opinion of our friend Col. Trumbull, with whom I have been since the receipt of your letter, on purpose, to take his advice (he begs his best respects be presented to you).

As to your particular & private reasons against attending they are clearly sufficient to convince any reasonable man of the propriety & consistency of your conduct.

1st, You declared, on resigning your Commission that you would not interfere again with public affairs—Should a period

ever arrive & (probably it may) when this declaration ought to be dispensed with, the Crisis is certainly not come.

2nd, You may urge with peculiar propriety your private affairs, & a right to enjoy the remainder of life in tranquility.

3dly, You have happily excused yourself, for substantial reasons, from attending in the General Meeting of the Cincinnati.—

This ought to be considered as an additional apology. Your declining to attend that Meeting will not (under the present circumstances) be considered in an unfavourable light by any description of men. But should you afterwards attend the convention it would more than probably produce uneasiness among the Officers in General, & evidently give an occasion to a certain Class to represent your Conduct as influenced by ambition on one hand, & as discovering a derilection of your old friends, on the other.

4th, The result of the convention may not be, perhaps so important as is expected: in which case your character would be materially affected. Other people can work up the present scene. I know your personal influence & character is, justly considered, the last stake which America has to play. Should you not reserve yourself for the united call of a Continent entire?

5thly, If you should attend on this Convention & concur in recommending measures, which should be generally adopted, but opposed in some parts of the Union, it would doubtless be understood that you had in a degree pledged yourself for their execution. This would at once sweep you back, irretreivably into the tide of public affairs. One feels such a lassitude & inaccuracy in attempting to unbosom himself in writing as makes him much less implicit & clear than he would be in an oral communication. Was I only at a mediate distance, I should endeavour to communicate verbally many sentiments respecting circumstances & characters which must now be suppressed.

Mr. Trumbull, Mr. Barlow & myself have written a good number of pieces in prose & verse on poetical subjects; we have the satisfaction to find that they are reprinted in more papers

& read with more avidity than any other performances. I enclose two late papers which contain specimens of poetry from which some judgment may be formed of our various exertions & manner of execution.

Pointed ridicule is found to be of more efficacy than serious argumentation.

Entreating you will be pleased to present my best Compliments & wishes to Mrs. Washington & family

I have the honour, to be, my dear General
Your sincere friend & Hble Servant,
D. Humphreys.

P. S. When I came from New York Town with the Standards &c. I rec'd 100 Dollars, by your warrant from the Military Chest to defray my expenses. I took vouchers for the expenditure at the time, but on settling my accounts with the Pay Master Gen they were not called for, they are now misplaced or lost—As the Public is indebted to me, I shall have occasion for a Certificate of the tenor of the enclosed sketch & will thank you for it.[1]

The prompt and decisive measures of Gen. Lincoln, the determination of Gov. Bowdoin that order should be restored and the presence in Western Massachusetts of a large force of militia under Gen. Sheppard soon gave confidence to the people of the State that the insurrection would be quelled.

Capt. Shays and his lieutenants had been gathering recruits in the mountain towns on the borders of the State. It was their intention to march to the various county-seats, and prevent the sessions of the Courts. They had leaders who exercised over them as much military authority as their followers would allow. During January the proclamations of Capt. Shays were many and inflammatory. His men went in small detachments into large towns and

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

villages terrorizing the inhabitants and then gathering all their scattered bands proceeded towards Worcester and Springfield. They reached West Springfield late in January, 1787. It was their intention to descend in force upon the United States Arsenal at Springfield, seize the arms stored there and proceed eastward to Worcester and Boston. Humphreys, who was still with his regiment at Hartford, tells the sequel in a letter to Gen. Washington.

HARTFORD, Feby. 11, 1787.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I had the honour to receive last evening by the post, your letter of the 23rd of Janry, and am happy to relieve you from your apprehension, by informing that your confidential favour of the 26th of Decr. with its enclosures had long since been safely received & duly acknowledged in a private letter which was forwarded more than a fortnight since, by Col. Wadsworth. But as he has business at New York & Philadelphia, and travels, like Mr. Morse, at his leisure, this may probably reach you, before his arrival at Mount Vernon.

In my last, I fully accorded with you, my dear General, on the inexpediency of your attending the Convention in May next; and gave you my reasons pretty fully on the subject.

It now gives me pleasure to advise you, that affairs have taken as favorable a turn in Massachusetts as could be expected. The official letters (which are published) will inform you of the manner in which the mob from Hampshire, Berkshire, & Worcester Counties assembled at Springfield; how they attempted (under Shays) to take possession of the Stores & Barracks; and finally how Sheppard by firing his *Field Pieces* killed four men & dispersed the rest. No small arms were discharged on either side. The next day Lincoln arrived from Boston with about 2500 men and routed a part of the Mob at West Springfield, without bloodshed. Shays soon after collected the different parties, who were in arms against government, at Pelham. Gen. Lincoln advancing to

Hadley the Insurgents scattered, some retiring home, others coming in & taking the oath of allegiance. Shays then abandoned fled with about 100 of the principals to the Hampshire Grants; as is supposed, either with a design of making their way to Canada or of waiting to see whether the General Court (now sitting) will not pass an Act of oblivion in their favour. The plans of the Insurgents do not appear to have been devised, or managed with system, or even with common ability. At an earlier period it was obviously in their power to have seized the public Magazine. The suppression of this crude essay, I am in hopes, will give a firmer tone to our government in the East.

I beg you will make me to be remembered to Mrs. Washington & the family with every token of esteem and that you will believe me to be

With sentiments of the highest veneration & respect

Your sincere friend & Hble Servant,

D. HUMPHREYS.

GEN. WASHINGTON.[1]

After this repulse on January 25, the insurgents again scattered and took refuge in Vermont, and the "King's District" in New York, in which were many small hamlets among the hills where they could safely conceal themselves. They still urged the debt-burdened people to join them, and in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, found a large minority of the people in their favour. Small parties kept coming out from the mountain fastnesses to harass and trouble quiet people and to invite the bolder and more daring of the young men to join them. They attempted to interfere with the execution of the laws and intimidate the judges. So critical seemed the situation in Berkshire that it was thought proper to concentrate a large force in Springfield. The progress of events is well described in this letter to Gen. Washington:

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

SPRINGFIELD, Feby. 28, 1787.

MY DEAR GENERAL:—

Since I had the pleasure of writing you last, I have received Orders to march the part of my Regt which is raised in Connecticut to this place. Two compleat Companies arrived on Saturday last. They occupy the Barracks & take the guard of the Arsenal & Magazines. I intend to return to Hartford in a few days & shall remain there probably for some time.

As I conceived you would be anxious to know what is the actual situation of affairs in this part of the Country, which has been the scene of tumult & confusion; I take up the pen to inform you in brief that after the Insurrection was quelled in this Country, General Lincoln marched into Berkshire.

In which County General Patterson is Maj. Gen. of Militia. His conduct is variously reported. Upon the whole it is said not to reflect much credit upon him. As Lincoln approached, the Insurgents who were collected in bodies of from 100 to 150 & 200 fled, some of these are still indispersed & lurk on the frontiers of N. York, & Vermont. The time for Service of the men who were raised for the first expedition is expired, Government are proceeding to raise 1000 more for four months. Lincoln with a handful of Recruits is at Pittsfield, & will continue to command the new Levies. Tho' the spirit of Rebellion does not seem to be absolutely broken yet it is to be presumed with prudence and perseverance it may be utterly subdued.[1]

In the meantime the state of the whole country and its political disorders were causing many, formerly averse to any general remedy for the defects of the Articles of Confederation, to become strong advocates for a revision or a new Constitution. The necessity for a uniform rate of tolls upon the canal proposed for the improvement of the navigation of the Potomac and Pokomoke rivers, in which Washington was greatly interested, had led to the appointment of the Commissioners by the States of Vir-

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

ginia and Maryland who met at Alexandria in March, 1785. An informal conference by them with Washington at Mount Vernon ended in a proposal for

the appointment of other Commissioners, with power to make conjoint arrangements, to which the assent of Congress was to be solicited, for maintaining a naval force in the Chesapeak. The commissioners were also to be empowered to establish a tariff of duties on imports to which the laws of both states should conform.

During the consideration of this proposal by the Legislature of Virginia, the suggestion was made that all the States be invited to send deputies to the meeting, and that the resolution concerning duties on imports should be communicated to every State. In this form the resolutions were adopted, and on Jan. 21, 1786, Commissioners were chosen to meet those from other States, to take into consideration the trade of the United States,[1]

to examine the relative situation and trade of the said states; to consider how far a uniform system in their commercial relations may be necessary to their common interest and their permanent harmony.[2]

In September, 1786, there were five States[3] represented in a Convention held at Annapolis under the presidency of Mr. John Dickinson of New Jersey. The unsatisfactory condition of the country, the desirability of stringent measures for the uniform regulation of trade, the necessity of a review of the expenses of the central government and a closer union between the States were discussed. As some of the Commissioners had no power to bind their States by action taken there, only debate

[1] Marshall's *Washington*, v., p. 90. [2] *Ibid.*, v., p. 91.
[3] New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.

and recommendation could be the outcome of the meeting. The Convention empowered its President to address a circular to the several State Legislatures setting forth the evils of the present system of government, and advising the appointment of delegates to a convention to be held in the city of Philadelphia on the second Monday in May, 1787. These delegates were to have full power to prepare a new Constitution, or revise the Articles of Confederation, their work to be subject to the review and approval of the Congress and the Legislatures of the States. This letter, which was approved by the Convention, was issued on September 14, 1786, and widely discussed. The strong supporters of the government, those who thought that the Confederation could and should enforce its recommendations, were doubtful of any favourable outcome of a convention; they considered Capt. Shays and his followers typical representatives of those who desired a convention and that greater evils than were then endured might be foisted on the country. But the pecuniary troubles that were so apparent and the absolute contempt shown for Congressional recommendation by many of the States put some energy into the members of Congress. A Grand Committee, Mr. Dane, Mr. Varnum, Mr. S. Mitchell, Mr. Forest, Mr. Blouet, Mr. Bull, and Mr. Few, to whom the letter had been referred by Congress, reported on February 21, 1787. It had carefully considered the letter and reasons for a convention. It thus expressed itself: as

> entirely coinciding with them as to the inefficiency of the federal government, and the necessity of devising such further provision as shall render the same adequate to the exigencies of the Union, [we] do strongly recommend to the different Legislatures to send forward delegates to meet the proposed Convention.

In the discussion which followed, the members from New York, under written instructions, moved for a convention to be held on an unspecified day for the revision of the Articles of Confederation. This was defeated. Three States, Massachusetts, New York and Virginia, voted for it, and New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, South Carolina, Delaware and Maryland voted against it, and Connecticut and Georgia were divided. The consideration of the report was then postponed. A Preamble and Resolutions were offered by a member from Massachusetts and adopted.

They provided for a convention to be held in Philadelphia on the second Monday in May. Its conclusions were subject to approval and revision by Congress and the people of the several States.

Upon this action, Col. Humphreys says in the conclusion of his letter from Springfield of February 28, the first part of which we have already given:

You will see in the public papers the Proceedings of the Legislature of this State; which carry much stronger marks of energy & decision, than have been exhibited on any former occasion.

I am just informed that in consequence of the refusal of the Legislature of New York to comply satisfactorily with the Requisitions of Congress respecting the five per Cent. Impost:—the last mentioned Body have recommended all the States to send a Representation to the Convention which is to be held at Philadelphia in May next. This may give a new complexion to that Business. Requesting to be remembered to Mrs. Washington & the family,

I have the honour to be, with sincerest esteem & affection

Your friend & humble Servant,

D. Humphreys.

Gen. Washington.[1]

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

Many of Washington's most devoted friends, including Humphreys, were reluctant to have him in any way concerned in the proposed convention. In a letter written from New Haven on March 24, 1787, Humphreys again gives his reasons against this course.

New Haven March 24th 1787.

My dear General,

I have but just had the pleasure to receive your favours of the 18th of Feby and 8th instant. Nor will I delay a moment giving my sentiments on the subject of the latter, for the sake of throwing them into a more elegant dress or methodical arrangement. I need hardly preface my observations by saying that I feel myself superlatively happy in your confidential communications, and in opportunities of proving that I do not write for the purpose of acquiring a reputation for fine composition, but for the sake of justifying the favourable opinion you have been pleased to form of my attachment & sincerity.

I may then, with justice, assert that so far from having seen any reason to change my opinion on respecting the inexpediency of your attending the Convention in May next, additional arguments have occured to confirm me in the sentiment. The probability which existed when I wrote before that nothing general or effectual would be done by the Convention, amounts now almost to a certainty. For the Assembly of Rhode Island (as I am lately given to understand) have decided against sending any Representation. Connecticut is under the influence of a few such miserable, narrow minded & I may say wicked Politicians, that I question very much whether the Legislature will chuse Members to appear in the Convention; and if they do, my apprehension is still greater that they will be sent on purpose to impede any salutary measures that might be proposed. This, there is little doubt, is actually the case with N. York, as it is asserted, two out of their three delegates are directly antifederal. What chance is there then that entire unanimity will prevail. Should this

be the fact, however, would not the several members, as it were pledge themselves for the execution of their system launch you again on a sea of Politics? As you justly observe matters must probably grow worse before they will be better.

Since I had the honour of addressing you last on this subject, I have been in the way of hearing the speculations of many different Characters on the proposed Convention, and their conjectures on the part you would act in consequence of your appointment to it.

I have heard few express any sanguine expectations concerning the successful issue of the Meeting & I think not one had judged it elegible for you to attend.

In this part of the Union, your not attending will not be considered either by the federal, or antifederal party, as a dereliction of Republicanism. The former believe it unimportant, or perhaps, injurious, to the national interests for you to come forward at present, the latter look upon the Convention as rather intended to subvert than support Republicanism: and will readily excuse your non attendance.

Notwithstanding your circular letter to the Cincinnati, I think it probable the General Meeting will re-elect you President. I hope they will—for matters, I am confident, will in some way or another work right before all is over.

Congress appears to be in a state of moral stupefaction or lethargy. It seems probable the Troops will be disbanded. I shall go to N. York next week but shall return in a few days & your letters addressed to me at Hartford will still continue to be regularly received.

I wish all my friends at Mount Vernon to be persuaded that something more heart felt than common Compl'ts is offered them on my part; while you, my dear General, should do me the justice to believe, that there is no one, in your numerous circle of acquaintances more sincerely attached to you than

Your affectionate friend,

D. Humphreys.

Gen Washington.[1]

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

The plan for the convention was in the interval being vigorously discussed in New York and elsewhere. All looked to Washington as their leader. All hoped he would guide the members of this untried body through all its manifold perplexities.

Writing again, on April 9, 1787, from Fairfield, Humphreys mentions this change on the part of particular friends of Washington:

(Private)

My dear General:—

Since I did myself the honour to address you on the 24th ult. I have been in New York & find such a variety of opinions prevailing with respect to the Convention, that I think it expedient to write to you again on the subject.

General Knox has shown to me, in confidence, his last letter to you; tho' I cannot concur in Sentiments altogether, yet, I think with him should you decide to be present at the Convention, it will be indispensable to arrive in Philadelphia the preceding week in order to attend the Gen. Meeting of the Cincinnati. This may palliate, perhaps, obviate one of my former objections.

I mentioned in my last, that I had not conversed with a single character of consideration, who judged it proper for you to attend the Convention. I have now seen several who think it highly interesting that you should be there. Gouverneur Morris & some others have wished me to use whatever influence I might have to induce you to come. I could not have promised this without counteracting my own judgment. I will not, however, hesitate to say that I do not conceive your attendance can hazard such personal ill consequences as were to be apprehended, before the proposed Meeting had been legitimated by the sanction of Congress.

If the difference of opinion amongst the members of this national Assembly should be as great as the variety of sentiments concerning the results, the progress of business before it, will be attended with infinite perplexity

& embarrassment; besides the two primary objects of discussion, viz;

1st—Whether the old Constitution can be supported or 2nd whether a new one must be established: I expect a serious proposal will be made for dividing the Continent into two or three separate Governments, Local politics & diversity of interests will undoubtedly find their way into the Convention. Nor need it be a matter of surprise to find there, as subjects of disagreement, the whole Western country as well as the navigation of the Mississippi.

Should you think proper to attend you will indisputably be elected President. This, would give the measures a degree of national consequence in Europe & with Posterity; but how far under some supposable case your personal influence unattended with other authority may compose the jarring interests of a great number of discordant Individuals, & control events, I will not take upon me to determine. We cannot augur anything very favourable, if we are to judge of future dispositions by those exhibited since the War.

The United States at large with a Sovereign contempt, (as if it was the only boast) have neglected your most earnest recommendations for doing justice to the Army. Congress continues to sport with your feelings by refusing for a course of years a compliance with their explicit promises respecting the confidential Persons, who were recommended in your farewell address to their notice. The declaration, on that occasion, was void of ambiguity, nor could circumstances or language add to its solemnity. But hear, oh Heaven! & be astonished oh Earth! Congress, as an acknowledgement of your influence a proof of their gratitude and a reward for your services, have (not to say pertinaciously) but with a series of consistencies not always discoverable in their proceedings, denied to accord the last & only favour you asked at their hands. Your friends Cobb & Trumbull can testify the infraction of them. I only mention this as one instance of national infamy to prove how much lighter than the least of all conceivable triffles are the faith & honour of the United States; & to show how little credit their future promises ought to

obtain. Should a candid History survey the turbulence & rascality of the times on which we are fallen Posterity will doubtless stand amazed, while they appreciate the conduct of the age.

I imagine there will be no representation from this State at the Genl Meeting of the Cincinnati unless I attend myself, should I be disengaged from Military affairs in season, I shall probably come on, & may pass the summer at Mt. Vernon. But everything depends upon contingencies.

I am sick of public men & public measures—Tranquility, elegant speculations, would accord best with my disposition. It begins to be time for me to think of domestic life if ever I intend it. Indeed could I find an amiable Lady, with a property which would put one at his ease, & who could like a man circumstanced as I am, I would marry to-morrow.

My best & most respectful Complts attend Mrs. Washington & every soul at Mount Vernon.

With Sentiments of the sincerest friendship & esteem I have the honour to be my dear General

Yours affectionately
D. Humphreys.

Gen. Washington.[1]

Congress having provided for a Convention felt relieved of all responsibility for the future. The Indians were not then demonstrative and public sentiment was still opposed to any army even on the western frontier. On Monday, April 9, 1787, upon report of a Committee, Mr. Varnum, Mr. Carrington, Mr. Few and Mr. Madison, it was voted that two companies of artillery be formed out of the troops already enlisted in the State of Massachusetts and the remaining troops enlisted under the resolution of October 20, 1786, were discharged.[2]

When the order for disbanding the troops was received by Col. Humphreys, he issued from the "Barracks, Springfield" on April 17, 1787, these "Regimental Orders":

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

[2] *Journal of Congress*, 1787, p. 28. Folwell's Reprint, 1801.

Congress having deemed it inexpedient to retain in service any of the troops ordered to be raised by their resolution of the 20th October, 1786, excepting two companies of artillery, consequently the third Regiment of Infantry commanded by Colonel Humphreys is to be disbanded.

The Companies at the barracks to be mustered to-morrow morning at ten o'clock. Colonel Humphreys has it in command from the Secretary at War to present his thanks to the officers for their industry and attention in the recruiting service—the Colonel is happy in adding his own to both officers and men for the soldier-like conduct exhibited on every occasion; particularly to the recruits for completing the fortifications and making so rapid a progress in acquiring a knowledge of military exercise and manœuvres. He thinks he is justified in saying that greater proficiency has not been made in the same space of time; and that he has never seen in any service a corps superior in the composition of its men to the Regiment he has had the honour to raise.

Indeed the character of the officers the appearance and behaviour of the men afforded the most solid expectation of their future utility, had their continuance in service been judged necessary.

He flatters himself that they have not passed their time altogether unprofitably, that they will carry the germ of discipline into civil life with them and that should the exigencies of the Public (which heaven avert) demand their military services, and should their present officers be honoured with a command they would have no reluctance to repair again to the standard of their country.[1]

[1] The *Connecticut Courant*, Monday April 23, 1787. No. 1161.

The authorities for "Shays's Rebellion" are:

The History of the Insurrection in Massachusetts in the year MDCCLXXXVI—and the Rebellion Consequent Thereon, by George Richards Minot, A.M. Boston: Published by James W. Burditt & Co., 1810.

Smith's *History of Pittsfield*, i., pp. 389–407.

Dr. Stiles's *Diary*, iii., pp. 249, 253, 258.

Disturbances began as early as 1782, after the passing of the Tender Act, July 3, 1782. The actual rebellion began in August, 1786 and lasted about a year. The Governor discharged all the State troops on September 12, 1787.

It is, however, a flattering circumstance for the commanding officer, and an instance so novel in the military history of our country that he takes a conscious pride in having it known that although the substantial part of discipline, which regards subordination and promptitude in obedience to orders was never more firmly fixed in any veteran corps or any permanent establishment, yet there is not a man belonging to the regiment who has received corporal punishment by the judgment of a court martial, or a blow from any of his officers for two months past since the institution of a disgraceful punishment for drunkenness has there been a single instance of intoxication.

Before the dissolution of the corps, the arms and accoutrements (which have been kept in the best possible condition) together with camp-utensils of every kind are to be restored into the public store.

As soon as all the necessary arrangements can be made and the two companies of artillery shall have arrived to take charge of the arsenal and magazine, the officers, the non-commissioned officers and privates are to be discharged from the Federal Service.

Colonel Humphreys takes an affectionate leave of them and most sincerely wishes every species of happiness may attend his gallant soldiers.

CHAPTER XXI

Washington Elected President

The Life of Putnam—Material Placed at Humphreys' Disposal by Dr. Waldo—Meeting of the Cincinnati at Philadelphia—Washington Attends it—Convention Held at Philadelphia—Jefferson's Attacks on the Cincinnati—Humphreys Sends Draft of a Reply—Death of Humphreys' Parents—Their Funeral—Writes to Acquaint Washington of his Loss—Gives the General Sentiment of New England on the Proceedings of the Philadelphia Convention—Washington Urges Humphreys to Take up his Home at Mount Vernon—Warville's Description of the Life at Mount Vernon—Also Reminiscences of Custis—Humphreys Translates *Widow of Malabar*—Meeting of the Connecticut Cincinnati—Humphreys Sends his Essay on the Life of Putnam in Place of an Oration—It is Well Received—And Request Made that it be Printed—It is Published—Ratification of the New Constitution—Humphreys Writes to Jefferson Giving Account of Matters in America—Organization of the First Congress—Election of Washington as President—Accompanied by Humphreys he Leaves Mount Vernon—Triumphal Progress—Reaches New York—Humphreys Superintends Inaugural Preparations—Washington Takes the Oath—Attends Service in St. Paul's Chapel—Appoints the Heads of Departments—Questions of Ceremony Considered—Suggestions of Hamilton and Madison—Rules Laid Down by Washington—Unreliable Anecdote about Humphreys.

IT had long been Humphreys' intention to present a sketch of his old commander Israel Putnam to the young men of America that should be authentic and interesting. While aide to the brusque old veteran and sharing his privations on the Hudson and at Redding Ridge, he had learned many incidents, told in the inimitable manner of "Old Put," as he was affectionately called.

In the intervals of duty with his regiment at Hartford and Springfield he not only wrote his satires on political events, but also gathered the material for the life of his former chief.

Dr. Albigence Waldo, a physician of reputation who had been a surgeon in the army and was then established at Pomfret, had begun a compilation of anecdotes illustrating the character of Gen. Putnam. It is probable that it was through the son of Gen. Putnam that he was made aware of the design of Col. Humphreys, and he courteously placed all his manuscripts at his disposal.

Col. Humphreys thus acknowledged this generous offer:

HARTFORD, March 21st, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

I have been honoured by the receipt of letter in which you inform me of your having compiled authentic *Documents* for an essay on the life of Major Genl. Putnam. I am truly happy the task has fallen to your lot, because I know it is in good hands, and I shall be obliged if you will transmit them (under cover to me) to the care of Col. Wadsworth in Hartford, thro' this channel of conveyance I shall become regularly possessed of them.

At one time or another I hope to have leisure to do as much justice to the subject, as can be affected by the pen of one who is an ardent admirer of the Hero of the intended Memoir.

I beg my best regards may be presented to the General, and that you will believe me to be, Sir,

Your most sincere friend and Humble Servant,

D. HUMPHREYS.

DOCTR. WALDO,

(Endorsed "From Colonel Humphreys
New Ambassador at the Court of Lisbon in Portugal")

The general meeting of the Cincinnati which was held in Philadelphia on the first Monday in May had aroused much public notice. The fears that it would in some

manner abridge the liberties of the people, that its whole aim was to exalt the officers of the army above the other people of the nation, were not yet fully allayed. The long discussion that had been held by letter among the friends of Washington as to the advisability of his attendance, after issuing a circular letter to the members of the State societies, giving excellent reasons why he could not be present, or again serve as its President General, was associated with the question of his taking part in the convention for revision of the Articles of Confederation.

Col. Humphreys' opinion was that of many other close associates of Washington. After collecting these opinions and also considering the letters of other friends who vehemently and cogently urged his attendance he wrote on March 28, 1787, to the Governor of Virginia that "as my friends with a degree of solicitude which is unusual, seem to wish for my attendance on this occasion, I have come to the resolution to go up if my health will permit."[1]

Col. Humphreys was the only one of the Connecticut delegates to the general meeting of the Cincinnati in attendance.[2] His colleagues were all detained by various duties; Dr. Stiles being confined with his College duties.[3]

At Philadelphia Col. Humphreys enjoyed the pleasure of seeing his dear General once more, and also many of his companions in arms. The meeting of the Society was a happy reunion for those who had suffered for their country.

They were anxiously discussing the results of the Convention for which the most distinguished and conservative

[1] Marshall's *Washington*, v., pp. 126, 127; also pp. 98, 109, 127, 129, for the opinion of his friends on the question.

[2] See account of his expenses in the Appendix.

[3] The Connecticut delegation was Gen. Parsons, Colonel Wadsworth, Colonel Humphreys, Lieutenant Pomeroy, and Dr. Stiles.—MS. Records Connecticut Society of the Cincinnati in possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

men in the country were then gathering. They confidently hoped that as Washington had brought to his country honourable peace by his skill in war, so now by his sound and calm judgment a sure and stable government might be given to the United States.

While in Philadelphia General Washington and Humphreys conferred upon the false impression given of the origin of the Cincinnati in the account of the United States in that famous work of French savants, the *Encyclopédie*.

M. Meunier applied to Gov. Jefferson, then Minister to France, for facts upon the history and government of this country. Mr. Jefferson promptly seized the occasion to air his views and sent an extended account which was incorporated by M. Meunier in the article he had prepared.

When that volume reached the United States there was much dissatisfaction with many of its statements. Mr. Jefferson was known to have aided the writer and also to have been one of those who distrusted the institution of the Cincinnati. He had also written a letter on the *Encyclopédie* article. It was thought expedient that a calm statement of the "Institution" and Washington's connection with it should be printed. Col. Humphreys promised to prepare the draft of such a letter. This he did after his arrival at New Haven, and sent it to the General with this brief note:

New Haven, May 28, 1787.

My dear General,

I intended fully, when I left Philadelphia to have written to you from New York, but on my arrival there my servant (who was a German) ran away, and I was so occupied in procuring another that I have not been able to take up the pen until the present moment.

Recollecting imperfectly, as I do the purport of Mr. Jefferson's letter as well as of the Extract from the Encyclopedie, I

have found myself embarrassed in attempting to say anything on so delicate a subject especially considering it a subject on whose merits Posterity is to judge, & concerning which every word that may be drawn from you, will probably hereafter be brought into question & scrutinized.

Under this view I have thought the less that could, with decency be said the better.

With sentiments of respect, friendship & consideration I have the honour to be, My dear General, your most Obed & Hble Servt.

D. Humphreys.

Gen. Washington.[1]

Sketch in Answer to Mr. Jefferson's letter.

I scarcely know what to say respecting that part of your communication which concerns the Cincinnati. It is a delicate, it is a perplexing subject. Not having the extract from the Encyclopedia before me, I cannot now undertake to enter into the merits of the publication. It may, therefore, perhaps be as much as will be expected from me, to observe that the Author appears in general to have detailed very candidly & ingeniously the motives & inducements which gave birth to the Society. Some of the subsequent facts which I cannot however, from memory pretend to discuss with precision, are thought by gentlemen who have seen the publication to be misstated; in so much that it is commonly said truth & falsehood are so intimately blended, that it will become very difficult to sever them. For myself I only recollect two or three circumstances in the narration of which palpable mistakes seem to have insinuated themselves. Major L'Enfant did not arrive & bring the Eagles during the session of the General Meeting, but sometime before that Convention. The Legislature of Rhode Island never passed any Act whatever on the subject notwithstanding what Mirabeau & others had previously advanced. Nothing can be more ridiculous than the supposition of the author that the Society was instituted partly because the

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

Country could not pay the Army except the assertion that the United States have now made full & compleat provision for paying, not only the arrearages, due to the Officers, but the half pay or commutation at their option. From whence the author deduces an argument for its dissolution. Tho' I conceive this never had anything to do with the Institution, yet the Officers, in most of the States who never have, nor, I believe, ever expect to receive, one farthing of the principal or interest on their final settlement securities would doubtless be much obliged to the author to convince them how & when they received a compensation for their services. No foreigner, nor American, who has been absent some time, will easily comprehend how tender those concerned are on this point, I am sorry to say a great many of the Officers consider me as having in a degree committed myself, by inducing them to trust too much in the justice of their country. They heartily wish no settlement had been made, because it has rendered them obnoxious to their fellow citizens, without affording the least emolument.

For the reasons I first mentioned I cannot think it expedient for me to go into an investigation of the Writer's deductions. I shall accordingly content myself with giving you some idea of the part I have acted, posterior to the first formation of the Association. When I found that you & many of the most respectable characters in the country would entirely acquiesce with the Institution as altered & amended in the first General Meeting of 1784 and that the objections against the hereditary & other obnoxious parts were wholly done away I was prevailed upon to accept the Presidency. Happy in finding (so far as I could learn by assiduous enquiry) that all the clamour & jealousies which had been excited against the original association had ceased. I judged it a proper time in the last autumn to withdraw myself from any farther agency in the business and, to make my retirement compleat, agreeably to my original plan, I wrote circular letters to all the States Societies announcing my wishes, informing them that I did not propose to be at Philadelphia at the triennial Meeting & requesting not to be reelected President. This was the last step of a public nature

I expected ever to have taken. But having since been appointed by my native State to attend the National Convention, & having been pressed to a compliance in a manner which it hardly becomes me to describe; I have in a measure been obliged to sacrifice my own Sentiments & to be present in Philadelphia at the very time of the General Meeting of the Cincinnati. After which I was not at liberty to decline the Presidency without placing myself in an extremely disagreeable situation with relation to that brave and faithful class of Men whose persevering friendship I have experienced on so many trying occasions.

There are no letters available from which to trace Humphreys' life during the summer.

Various productions in the Connecticut papers on the Convention then sitting at Philadelphia seem to be by him, although they cannot positively be identified. He was following with interest the deliberations in Philadelphia, but little was allowed to escape from the chamber under the presidency of General Washington.

During this summer the children and friends of the Rev. Daniel Humphreys and his wife felt much anxiety for the health of "Lady Humphreys." The couple had lived together in peace for nearly fifty years. The affection and respect of the community had been given to them, and they were known far and wide for their benevolence and hospitality.

They had seen their children grow up to be an honour and comfort to them and of use to the town and nation, and now they were not to be long divided by death, for on July 29, in the seventy-sixth year of her age, Sarah Humphreys passed away, and on the 2d of the following September, the Rev. Daniel Humphreys died in his eighty-first year, and the fifty-fourth of his ministry.

His funeral was largely attended in the house of worship

from whose sacred desk he had for more than half a century taught the people of his charge.

Dr. Stiles gives this account of it in his *Diary:*

[September] 4. Rode over to Darby & attended the Funeral of the Rev^{d} Daniel Humphreys. The Corps was in the Meet^{g} house the service began by Prayer by D^{r} Edw^{ds}.[1] Then the 71st., Ps. Watts, was sung. The Rev^{d} Mr. Leavenworth preached on 2 Tim. IV., 6–8, an hour & 5.[2] After prayer an Anthem from the 7th Chapter of Job. One hour & three Qu^{rs} in Exercise. Procession to the Grave. After Interment, I made a speech at the desire of Col. Humphreys & the Family. Returned home. Twelve ministers attended the Funeral & a numerous Concourse.[3]

The entry made by his son, the Hon. John Humphreys, seems to be both just and discriminating:

The Rev. Mr. Humphreys having received a liberal education at Yale College, and devoted his future to books and contemplation, his mind was embellished with human literature, but the study of theology was his favourite employment. He was possessed of a masculine understanding, particularly calculated to reason and distinguish. His manner, instead of being tinctured with the austere gloom of superstitition, exhibited that hilarity which made him the delight of his acquaintances. A consciousness of intentional rectitude was productive of cheerfulness and serenity, a desire of making others happy was the effect of philanthropy and religion. This conspired to give him a peculiar faculty and dignity of manner on every occasion. The honourable discharge of all

[1] The Rev. Jonathan Edwards, Jr., D.D., a son of the famous New England theologian, and himself a voluminous author, pastor of White Haven Church, New Haven, 1769–1795.

[2] The Rev. Mark Leavenworth, Pastor of the First Church of Christ, in Waterbury, 1740–1797.

[3] Dr. Stiles's *Diary*, iii., p. 280.

the duties of the domestic, the social, the sacred functions, and the undeviating practice of unaffected piety through a long life will be the best comment on his creed and complete his character.[1]

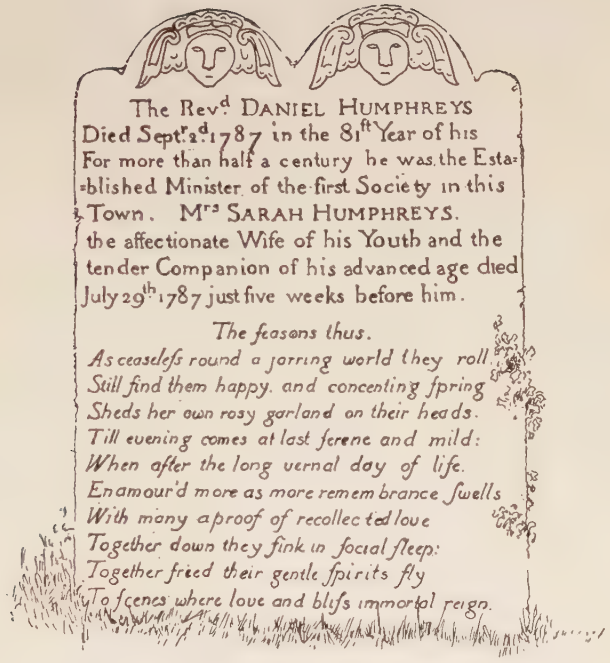
Upon the monument in the old cemetery of "Up Town" may be read this inscription:

The Revd. Daniel Humphries died Sept. 2, 1787 in the 81st year of his age. For more than half a century he was the established minister of the first Society in this town. Mrs. Sarah Humphries the affectionate wife of his youth and the tender Companion of his advanced age died July 29, 1787 just five weeks before him.

The seasons thus
As ceaseless round a jarring world they roll
Still find them, happy and consenting spring
Sheds her own rosy garland on their heads
Till evening comes at last serene and mild
When after the long vernal day of life
Enamored more as more resemblance swells
With many a proof of recollected love
Together down they sink in social sleep
Together freed their gentle spirits fly
To scenes where love and bliss immortal reign.

With this sundering of home ties, and with the natural sadness which seeks in change of scene to divert the mind after some deep affliction David Humphreys turned to his sympathetic friend at Mt. Vernon. The successful issue of the Constitutional Convention in producing an instrument for the government of the country, which although confessedly a compromise, and acceded to by some of the members with dismal forebodings, secured a stable government to the people of the United States.

[1] *The Humphreys Family in America*, p. 130. See Orcutt's *History of Derby*, p. 594.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The seasons thus.
As ceaseless round a jarring world they roll
Still find them happy. and concenting spring
Sheds her own rosy garland on their heads.
Till evening comes at last serene and mild:
When after the long vernal day of life.
Enamour'd more as more remembrance swells
With many a proof of recollected love
Together down they sink in social sleep:
Together freed their gentle spirits fly
To scenes where love and bliss immortal reign.

Daniel Humphreys Tombstone

The following letter to Col. Hamilton upon a forged document circulated in Connecticut gives the trend of opinion among some politicians of that State.

New Haven, Sept. 16, 1787.

My dear Sir;

Our friend, Col. Wadsworth has communicated to me a letter, in which you made inquiries respecting a political letter which has lately circulated in this State. I arrived in this town yesterday, and have since conversed with several intelligent persons on the subject. It appears to have been printed in a Fairfield paper as long ago as the 25th of July. I have not been able to trace it to its source. Mr. Wetmore informs me that when he first saw the letter it was in the hands of one Jared Mansfield, who, I believe has formerly been reputed a Loyalist.

Indeed it seems to have been received and circulated with avidity by that class of people whether it was fabricated by them, or not. I think, however, there is a little doubt it was manufactured in this State. I demanded of Mr. Wetmore what he thought were the wishes and objects of the writer of that letter. He said he believed it might be written principally for the amusement of the author, and perhaps with some view to learn whether the people were not absolutely indifferent to all government and dead to all political sentiment.

Before I saw the letter in question, a paragraph had been published by Mr. Meig's, giving an account of it, and attempting to excite the apprehensions of the Anti-federalists with an idea that the most disastrous consequences are to be expected, unless we shall accept the proceedings of the Convention. Some think this was the real design of the fictitious performance, but others with more reason, that it was intended to feel the public pulse, and to discover whether the public mind would be startled with propositions of Royalty. The quondam tories have undoubtedly conceived hopes of a future union with Great Britain from the inefficacy of our Government, and the tumults which prevailed in Massachusetts during the last Winter. I saw a letter written at that period,

by a Clergyman of considerable reputation in Nova Scotia, to a person of eminence in this State, stating the impossibility of our being happy under our present Constitution, and proposing (now we could think and argue calmly on all the consequences) that the efforts of the virtuous, the moderate, and the brave, should be exerted to effect a reunion with the parent State. He mentioned among other things how instrumental the Cincinnati might be, and how much it would redound to their emolument. It seems by a conversation I have had here that the ultimate practicability of introducing the Bishop of Osnaburgh[1] is not a novel idea among those who were formerly termed Loyalists. Ever since the Peace it has been occasionally talked of and wished for. Yesterday where I dined, half in jest—half in earnest—he was given as the first toast.

I leave you now, my dear friend, to reflect how ripe we are for the most mad and ruinous project that can be suggested, especially when in addition to this view, we take into consideration how thoroughly the patriotic part of the community—the friends of an efficient Government, are discouraged with the present system, and irritated at the popular demagogues who are determined to keep themselves in office at the risk of everything. Thence apprehensions are formed, that though the measures proposed by the Convention, may not be equal to the wishes of the most enlightened and virtuous, yet that they will be too high-toned to be adopted by our popular assemblies.

Should that happen, our political ship will be left afloat on a sea of chance without a rudder as well as without a pilot.

I am happy to see you have (some of you) had the honest

[1] The second son of George III., Frederick Duke of York, was at that time the secular Bishop of Osnaburgh, a town in the Prussian Province of Hanover, in the Valley of the Hesse, seventy-five miles south-west of Bremen and seventy miles west-south-west of Hanover. By the peace of Westphalia, October 24, 1648, it was provided that the Bishopric, founded by Charlemagne in 810, should be held alternately by a "Catholic prelate" and a Protestant secular Prince of the House of Brunswick, Lüneburg. In 1802 the chapter was dissolved. The Bishopric was re-established in 1857.

boldness to attack in a public paper the Anti-federal dogmas of a great personage in your State. Go on and prosper. Were the men of talents and honesty properly combined into one phalanx, I am confident that they would be competent to hew their way through all opposition. Were there no little jealousies, bickerings and unworthy sinister views to divert them from their object, they might by perseverance establish a Government calculated to promote the happiness of mankind and to make the Revolution a blessing instead of a curse.

I think it is probable that I shall soon go to the southward; in the meantime, I beg you to be persuaded that I am,

With sentiments of sincere friendship and esteem,

My dear Hamilton,

Your most obedient and most humble serv't.

D. Humphreys.

Col. Hamilton.[1]

In a letter to his "dear General" written from New Haven September 26, 1787, he mentions with repressed emotion the death of his parents, and skilfully touches upon the topics of the hour and announces his inclination to accept the repeated invitations to visit Mt. Vernon.

New Haven, Septr. 28, 1787.

My dear General,

I would not trespass on your attention, while you was occupied with such momentuous affairs as the revisal of the confederation; the last time I had the honour of addressing a letter to you was, I believe, in the beginning of June, from this place—in that letter was enclosed the sketch of an Answer to Mr. Jefferson. I hope it came safe to your hands.

We have been a few days since gratified with the publication of the Proceedings of the Convention. I must acknowledge myself to have been favourably disappointed & highly pleased with the general tenor of them. Altho' to collect the senti-

[1] The *Works* of Alexander Hamilton, Published by Order of the Joint Library Committee of Congress, edited by John C. Hamilton, New York, Charles S. France & Co., MDCCCLI., vol. i., p. 442.

ments of the Public with certainty and altho' attempts to prevent the adoption must be expected, yet I cannot but hope, from what I hear that the opposition will be less than was apprehended. All the different Classes in the liberal professions will be in favour of the proposed Constitution. The Clergy, Lawyers, Physicians & Merchants will have considerable influence on Society. Nor will the officers of the late Army be backward in expressing their approbation. Indeed the well affected have not been wanting in efforts to prepare the minds of the Citizens for the favourable reception of whatever might be the result of your Proceedings. I have had no inconsiderable agency in the superintendance of two Presses from which more News Papers are circulated I imagine, than from any others in New England. Judicious & well timed publications have great efficacy in ripening the judgment of men, in this quarter of the Continent.

In case that everything succeeds in the best manner, I shall certainly be the first to rejoice in finding that my apprehensions were not verified; as well as to felicitate you upon having contributed your assistance on so interesting & important an occasion. Your good Angel, I am persuaded, will not desert you. What will tend, perhaps more than anything to the adoption of the new system will be an universal opinion of your being elected President of the United States, and an expectation that you will accept it for a while. Since I had the honour of seeing you, in Philadelphia, I have made the tour of the New England States as far as Portsmouth, I was happy to find in Massachusetts the spirit of Insurrection pretty generally subsided, and an impression left on the minds of People, in most of the States, that something energetic must be adopted respecting the national Government or we shall be a ruined nation.

I have lately lost both my Father and Mother in a good age. The former was upwards of eighty the latter seventy-six years old. They had lived in circumstances of more happiness than commonly falls to the lot of Mortality. They were the best of Parents. I feel myself less attached to this particular part of the Country than formerly.

And now, my dear General, I know not of anything that will prevent me, very soon, from paying a visit to Mount Vernon and a visit for the Winter. I propose coming with my Servant & Horses. I should have been apprehensive of occasioning too much trouble had I not believed your unequivocal & warm expressions of kindness & friendshp were the indication of a cordial reception.

Let the ship of the Public float towards the harbour of tranquillity & safety or let her be in danger of being stranded on the rocks of discord & anarchy; we shall be conscious that some individuals have done their duty, & I flatter myself we shall enjoy in the bosom of your family such hours of domestic satisfaction, as I recollect we have experienced formerly at Mount Vernon. I am in full hopes of being on the spot this year to do ample justice to the Christmas Pye.

I beg that every sentiment of affectionate regard may be presented on my part, to Mrs. Washington and the good family under your roof.

With the sincerest friendship,

I am, my dear General,

Your Most obedient & Most humble Servt.

D. HUMPHREYS.

His Excellency

GEN. WASHINGTON.[1]

The answer of the General was prompt. He condoled with him upon his affliction, and cordially renewed his previous invitations, assuring his friend of a warm welcome.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 October, 1787.

MY DEAR HUMPHREYS,

Your favor of the 28th ulto came duly to hand as did the former of June. With great pleasure I received the intimation of your spending the winter under this Roof. The invitation was not less sincere than the reception will be cordial. The only stipulations I shall contend for are, that in all things you

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

shall do as you please. I will do the same; and that no ceremony may be used or any restraint be imposed on any one.

The Constitution that is submitted, is not free from imperfections but there are as few radical defects in it as could well be expected, considering the heterogeneous mass of which the Convention was composed and the diversity of interests that are to be attended to. As a Constitutional door is open for future amendments and alterations, I think it would be wise in the People to accept what is offered to them and I wish it may be by as great a majority of them as it was by that of the Convention; but this is hardly to be expected because the importance and sinister views of too many characters will be affected by the change. Much will depend however, upon literary abilities, and the recommendation of it by good pens should be *openly*, I mean, publickly afforded in the Gazettes. Go matters however as they may, I shall have the consolation to reflect that no objects but the public good—and that peace and harmony which I wished to see prevail in the Convention, obtruded even for a moment in my bosom during the whole Session long as it was—What reception this State will give to its proceedings in all its extent of territory, is more than I can inform you of; in these parts it is advocated beyond my expectation—the great opposition (if great there should be) will come from the Southern and Western Counties, from whence I have not as yet, received any accounts that are to be depended on.

I condole with you at the loss of your Parents; but as they lived to a good old age you could not be unprepared for the shock, tho' it is painful to bid an everlasting adieu to those we love, or revere. Reason, Religion and Philosophy may soften the anguish of it, but time alone can eradicate it.

As I am beginning to look for you, I shall add no more in this letter but the wishes of the Family and the affectionate regards of a Sincere friend &c.[1]

The exact date is not known, but it must have been shortly after the above letter, when with his servant and his

[1] Ford's *Washington*, xi., pp. 166, 167.

favourite horses Col. Humphreys left for ever the ancestral home and commenced a new era in his life upon the broader field of national affairs, for all knew that General Washington would soon be drawn from his retirement to guide the frail bark of the infant Republic and that his friends and intimate associates would share his glory and his peril.

The life at Mount Vernon is described by those privileged to enjoy the delights of a well ordered household as a mingling of stately etiquette and unaffected simplicity. Gen. Washington was a careful and scientific planter and personally superintended the work of his overseer and slaves. He was a kind but exacting master. Within the house much of the care that oppressed him was thrown off, and he became the courteous host.

Lady Washington combined many of the qualities that made her an ideal hostess. In the immediate family were the General and Mrs. Washington, the children of Col. John Parke Custis, whom Washington had adopted, George Washington Parke, and Eleanor, or Nelly as she was usually called.

Mr. Tobias Lear, a young graduate of Harvard, was the tutor of these lively and sometimes mischievous young Virginians, and also acted as Secretary to the General. The relations of the heads of the family were often visiting there; Col. Bassett and his daughter Fanny, whose mother was the favourite sister of Washington, Col. Fielding Lewis and his wife, another sister, Mrs. David Smart with her family, and the mother of the Mount Vernon children were among those often seen on the cool verandas, or by the river banks, or in the woods that diversified the estate.

An observing Frenchman, M. Brissot de Warville, thus records his impressions:

> Everything has an air of simplicity in his house; his table is good but not ostentatious; and no deviation is seen from

regularity and domestic economy. Mrs. Washington superintends the whole, and joins to the quality of an excellent housewife, that simple dignity which ought to characterise a woman whose husband has acted the greatest part on the theatre of human affairs; while she possesses that amenity and manifests that attention to strangers which renders hospitality so charming.[1]

Into this family life Col. Humphreys was admitted. His social qualities, his urbanity of manner, his fund of information and poetic temperament and readiness to engage in whatever business or pleasure there was on hand made him an acceptable member of the household. He could aid in entertaining guests, he could ride to the hounds with the General and his guests, he could discuss the state of the crops, or turn a compliment or sonnet for the young demoiselles that were the companions of Nellie Custis.

In his old age Mr. Custis, who long occupied the historic mansion on Arlington Heights, sometime the home of Gen. Robert E. Lee, and now a part of the Soldiers' Home domain, wrote his recollections of the life at Mount Vernon. As a boy he admired Col. Humphreys for his athletic qualities and for his devotion to the Muses. He tells an amusing story of the crowded bedchamber in which slept the Colonel, young Custis, and two other young relatives, at various times.

The Colonel was then translating from the French into the English verse the tragedy of *The Widow of Malabar*. After the lights were out at night he would lie awake revolving the couplets in his mind, polishing and perfecting them, and at times jump out of bed to recite his completed work aloud to judge of its effect, and thus awaken his companions.

[1] Miss Wharton's *Martha Washington*, pp. 166, 167.

Mount Vernon

He also preserved this anecdote of a display of horsemanship by the Colonel. As Washington and the Colonel were one day riding about Mount Vernon the Colonel challenged his companion to jump over a hedge.

> Washington, always ready to accept a challenge where riding was concerned, told the Colonel to go on. Humphreys put his horse at the hedge, cleared it and landed in a quagmire on the other side up to his horse's girths; whereupon Washington rode, stopped, and looking blandly at his struggling friend, remarked, "Ah, Colonel, you are too deep for me."[1]

Serious work also occupied his time. He finished his translation of the *Widow*, and it was placed in the hands of an able company of players then wandering about the country, and who acted new plays for the first time much as plays are now performed in some country place before being acted on a New York stage.

In conversation with the General and military visitors and in his sketch of General Putnam he renewed the scenes of the Revolution.

It is uncertain whether he made any progress with a complete History of the Revolution to which, as has been previously seen, Gen. Washington urged him. Since he had first mentioned the subject to the General, many had taken in hand the preparation of such a history.

Several persons had applied to Washington to allow them access to his papers. It is understood that although willing to answer specific questions and to converse with those who contemplated writing upon that theme, his military papers, which had been carefully arranged and some of them copied under the supervision of Col. Richard Varick, were not opened until used by Judge Marshall for his *Life of Washington*.

[1] As quoted by Hon. Henry C. Lodge, in *George Washington*, ii., p. 370, in American Statesmen Series, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

Among the earliest writers was the Rev. Dr. Gordon, sometime minister of Roxbury, Massachusetts, who had the advantage of examining many private papers before his departure for England, and had received personal reminiscences from various Revolutionary officers.[1]

Echoes from the busy world reached Mt. Vernon by every postrider, and many of the private travellers. Letters from all over the country assured Washington that the work of the Convention would be approved by a sufficient number of States for the government under it to be soon organized. In the newspapers, in the taverns, and other places of meeting, the merits and defects of the Constitution were eagerly discussed. There was a large and noisy minority who could see in it nothing but tyranny and aristocracy.

New York and Virginia hesitated a long while and their conventions for the purpose were eagerly watched by the friends of order and permanence. General Knox, then Secretary at War, writes from "New York, 5 o'clock morning of the 2d. July, 1788" to his friend Colonel Wadsworth at Hartford:

> My dear friend Rejoice—Heaven has influenced the Virginia Convention to adopt the Constitution by a majority of ten. This great event took place on Wednesday, the 25th of June. Some amendments will be stated in the manner of Massachusetts.[2]

The meeting of the Connecticut Society of the Cincinnati was held in the Centre Church, Hartford, on July 3,

[1] His book appeared in London in 1788, in four volumes of octavo size. It was republished in New York in three volumes, in 1789. Its title is: *History of the Rise, Progress and Establishment of the Independence of the United States.*

[2] MS. Wadsworth Papers, in the Collection of the Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Conn.

1788, when a sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Nathan Strong. The business meeting was held in the State House.

Through its President, Col. Wadsworth, the MS. of *An Essay on the Life of the Honorable Major-General Putnam* was presented to the Society by Colonel Humphreys in place of the oration that he had been asked to deliver. In his letter of presentation written from "Mount Vernon in Virginia," June 4, 1788, addressed to Col. Wadsworth, he says that

> unavoidable absence will prevent me from performing the grateful task assigned to me by the State Society of the Cincinnati on the fourth of July next. Though I cannot personally address them I wish to demonstrate by some token of affectionate remembrance, the sense I entertain of the honour they have more than once conferred on me by their suffrages.
>
> Meditating in what manner to accomplish this object it occurred to me, that an attempt to preserve the actions of General Putnam, in the Archives of our State Society would be acceptable to its members; as they had all served with great satisfaction under his immediate orders.[1]

The Essay was received by his brother officers with much gratification. It is possible portions of it were read at the meeting, and it was resolved "the thanks of the Society to be given to Col. Humphreys for his History of the Life of Major Genl. Putnam communicated to the Society, and expressing their wish that the same may be printed."[2]

He was also chosen one of the delegates to the next General Meeting and orator for the next year. The Essay was printed in the fall of that year by Hudson and

[1] *An Essay on the Life of the Honorable Major-General Israel Putnam*, Col. David Humphreys.

[2] MS. Records of the Connecticut Society of the Cincinnati.

Goodwin in Hartford in a duodecimo volume of one hundred and eighty-seven pages.[1]

While at Mt. Vernon, Col. Humphreys spent some of his time in other literary work than that upon his *Life of Putnam*.

Mr. Matthew Carey in Philadelphia was then attempting to make his *American Museum* the exponent of what was best in American literature. Young and ambitious writers were welcomed and their poems, sketches and other "pieces" willingly published.

Col. Humphreys had previously published some poems in the magazine. This letter shows that he was a writer of good prose as well as polished verse.

MOUNT VERNON, Septr. 1st, 1786.

(Private)

SIR,

I forward some pieces for your Museum. The account of Mr. Pierce was a subject, which I was rather impelled to handle, from an apprehension no other person, acquainted with the circumstances would do it. If you suppose the facts will acquire authenticity, or your Miscellany credit, from the name of the writer, you are at liberty to announce from what part you received it. I only wish that it may be *correctly printed*. If a tolerably good profile, or other engraving of Mr. Pierce could be procured for your Museum it would doubtless be very acceptable to his friends, who are numerous. Attention to matters of this kind, on suitable occasions, might serve to give your publication an advantage over other periodical works in America. Mr. Pierce's countenance was so peculiar that a stronger likeness of him might be more easily given, than of almost any other person in the Union. I think an Artist might almost draw it from my description.

[1] It is advertised in the *Connecticut Courant* of Monday September 1, 1788, as "published this day." For the advertisement see Appendix: for the various editions and additions to the Essay, see Bibliography.

The other Manuscripts I imagine will be novel & interesting to your Readers.

I enclose also the only copy I have ever been able to find of the Bermudias, a Poem by an American, which I conceive (when you are barren of Politics) will not disgrace your collection. I wonder you never republished the poem, entitled "Philosophic Solitude" & written by Governor Livingstone, a great many years ago. It has much merit.

Genl. Washington has had the complaisance to frank this letter without knowing the contents. I shall be glad to know it has been safely received.

With great regard
I am, Sir,
Your most obedient & most humble
Servt.

D. Humphreys.

Mr. M. Carey.[1]

Late in the summer of 1788 it was known that eleven of the thirteen States had ratified the Constitution, Rhode Island and North Carolina not accepting or rejecting it.

On September 13, the Continental Congress passed an Act for an election throughout the Union to choose electors of President and Vice-President of the United States.

It was to be held on the first Wednesday in January, 1789, and the electors were to meet on the first Wednesday in February to make a choice.

Washington was honestly reluctant to enter once more into public life. His judicious friends Hamilton, Jay, Knox, Col. Henry Lee, and others, wrote frequently urging him to accept the Presidency which would be offered to him by the voice of the whole people.

In his replies he deprecated the excellence they ascribed to him and thought some other person could as acceptably fill the office.

[1] The original of this letter is in the possession of the author.

It was while the preliminaries to the organization of the new government were being arranged and the people were awaiting with some impatience the leisurely procedure of Congress that Col. Humphreys sent to Mr. Jefferson a pleasant letter in which he commented on political events and surveyed the state of the country. It is in answer to the following long letter from Jefferson from Paris a year before.

PARIS, Aug. 14, 1787.

DEAR SIR:—

I remember when you left us, it was with a promise to supply all the defects of correspondence in our friends, of which we complained, & which you had felt in common with us. Yet I have received but one letter from you which was dated June 5, 1786 and I answered it Aug. 14, 1786. Dropping that, however, and beginning a new account, I will observe to you that wonderful improvements are making here in various lines in architecture the wall of circumvallation round Paris and the palaces by which we are to be let in & out are nearly compleated, two hospitals are to be built instead of the old-hotel dieu, one of the old bridges is begun at the Place Louis XV. the Palais royal is gutted, a considerable part in the center of the garden being dug up, and a subterranean circus begun wherein will be equestrian exhibitions, so in society the habit habillé is almost banished, and they begin to go even to great suppers in frock; the court & diplomatic corps, however, must always be excepted, they are too high to be reached by any improvement. They are the last refuge from which étiquette, formality & folly will be driven. Take away these & they would be on a `evel with other people. The Assemblée des Notables have done a great deal of good here. Various abolitions of abusive laws have taken place & will take place. The government is allotted into subordinate administrations, called Provincial Assemblies, to be chosen by the people; great reductions of expence in the trappings of the king, queen & princes in the department of war notwithstanding this. The dis-

covery of the abuses of public money, some expences of the court not in unison with the projects of reform, & the new taxes, have raised within a few weeks a spirit of discontent so loud & so general as I did not think them susceptible of. They speak in all companies, in coffee-houses, in the streets, as if there were no Bastile; & indeed to confine all offenders in this way, the whole Kingdom should be converted into a Bastile. The Parliament of Paris puts itself at the head of this opposition. The king has been obliged to hold a bed of justice to enforce the registering the new taxes. The parliament proposes to forbid their execution, and this may possibly be followed by their exile. The mild and patriotic spirit of the new ministry, & the impossibility of finding subjects to make a new parliament may perhaps avoid this extremity. It is not impossible but that all the domestic disturbances may be calmed by foreign difficulties. War has within a few days past become more probable. Tho' the kings of England and Prussia had openly espoused the views of the Stad-holder, yet negotiations were going on which gave hopes of accommodation. But the stoppage of the Princess of Orange, on her way to excite commotion at the Hague, kindled the kingly pride of her brother, & without consulting anybody he ordered 20,000 men to march instantly to revenge this insult. The stoppage of the sister of a king then is sufficient cause to sacrifice the lives of hundreds of thousands of better people & to lay the most fertile parts of Europe in ashes. Since this hasty movement, which is pertinaciously pursued, the English squadron has sailed westwardly, and will be followed by a squadron from Brest, while a land army moves on to the confines of Holland. Still, however, the negotiations are continued, and it is thought that the fiscal distress of the provincial powers may yet prevent war. So much for the blessings of having kings, from these events our young republics may learn many useful lessons, never to call on foreign powers to settle their differences, to guard against hereditary magistrates, to prevent their citizens from becoming so established in wealth & power as to be thought worthy of alliance by marriage with the nieces, sisters, etc. of kings, and in short to besiege the throne of heaven with

eternal prayers to extirpate from creation this class of human lions, tygers & mammouts called kings; from whom, let him perish, who does not say "good lord deliver us" and that so we may say one & all, or perish, is the fervent prayer of him who has the honour to mix with it sincere wishes for your health & happiness, & to be with real attachment & respect, dear Sir, your affectionate friend & humble servant.

TH. JEFFERSON.

P. S. Aug. 14th Parliament is exiled to Troyes this morning.[1]

MOUNT VERNON, Nov. 29th, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

It was not until a few days ago & more than fourteen months from its date, that I had the pleasure of receiving your favour of the 14th of August 1787. I have at different times been honoured by several others, some of which had marks on the seal, indicative of their having undergone an inspection. To all, I generally gave answers immediately after their receipt. But a letter must commonly be rather insipid, where one is obliged to take into the calculation, that it is very probable it will be opened before it reaches its destination. Having now a sure conveyance by Mr. Gouverneur Morris, I should hold myself inexcusable not to make use of it.

There has been an extraordinary revolution in the sentiments of men, respecting political affairs since I came to America; and much more favourable in the result than could have been reasonably expected.

At the close of the war after the little season of unlimited credit was passed, the people in moderate circumstances found themselves very much embarrassed by the scarcity of money by debts & taxes. They affected to think that the part of Society composed of men in the liberal professions & those who had considerable property, were in combination to distress them, & to establish an Aristocracy. Demagogues made use of these impressions to procure their own elections to carry their own schemes into execution. Lawyers, in some States,

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

by these artifices, became indiscriminately odious. In others, men of the strongest local prejudices & narrowest principles had the whole direction of the affairs of their States. You will feel the force of this assertion the more readily, when you shall have been informed that the same Genl. Wadsworth, who was in Congress with you at Annapolis became, in conjunction with two or three of his subalterns, the director of every political measure in Connecticut and prevented in almost every instance, a compliance with the Requisitions of Congress. On the other part great numbers of those who wished to see an inefficient federal government prevail, began to fear that the bulk of the people would never submit to it.

In short some of them, who had been utterly averse to Royalty, began to imagine that hardly anything but a King could cure the evil. It was truly astonishing to have been witness to some conversations, which I have heard. Still, all the more reasonable men saw that the remedy would be infinitely worse than the disease. In this fluctuating & irritable situation the public mind continued for some time. The insurrection in Massachusetts was not without its benefits. From a view of the importance of the general government, of the contempt in which we were held abroad, & of the want of happiness at home, the Public was thus gradually wrought to a disposition for receiving a government possessed of sufficient energy to prevent the calamities of Anarchy, or civil war; & yet guarded, as well as the nature of circumstances will admit, so as to prevent it from degenerating into Aristocracy, Anarchy, or Monarchy. True it is, that honest & wise men have differed in sentiment about the kind of checks & balances which are necessary for this purpose; but equally true is it that there is not an honest & wise man who does not see & feel the indispensable necessity of preserving the Union. You will have been informed, long since, that all the states, Rhode Island & North Carolina excepted, have acceded to the proposed form of government. In the former, paper money & dishonesty are the sole causes of their perseverance in opposition.—the same reasons are also assigned for the conduct of North Carolina; how justly, how unjustly, I know not. It is

believed, however, that the latter will come into the pale of the new Union at the eleventh hour.

The general opinion of the Advocates for the Government is, that some explanations & amendments are highly necessary. They conceive, however, that it might be dangerous to put everything afloat, in seeking that object before some degree of stability shall have been given to the system, by its being carried into effect.

But it is thought that some who push for premature amendments, wish to sap its very existence.

That is to say, its opponents in the State of New York. Be that as it may, the probabilities amount almost to a certainty that it will be quietly carried into effect in March next. The Senators are as yet chosen only in three States, viz; in Connecticut, Dr. Johnson & Mr. Ellsworth, than whom better men for the purpose could not have been found there; in Pennsylvania Mr. R. Morris & Mr. McClay, the former you know personally the latter is well spoken of. Col. R. H. Lee & Col. Grayson, the Senators of this State, are not yet comprehended under the denomination of Federalists—but, it is generally believed, they will be less violent, than many of their party. Mr. Madison was in nomination with those two gentlemen & lost his election by 8 or 9 votes. This was owing entirely to Mr. Patrick Henry, who openly opposed his election, & who carries every measure he espouses in the Assembly. In throwing the State into Districts for the choice of Representatives to Congress, it is said he has taken particular pains to prevent Mr. Madison from being chosen. Some who wish equally well to the government and Mr. Madison imagine it may be the means of having him better employed as Minister for the Home Department. The Report is prevalent on good authority, that, in Maryland, Mr. Carrol of Carrolton, and Mr. Henry of the Eastern Shore, will be appointed Senators; & that nearly or quite all the Representatives will be men of federal characters.

The opinion seems to be universal that Genl. Washington will be elected President. Should that be the case, I am unable to say whether he will accept or refuse. In conformity

to the prudence of his character, he will postpone giving his ultimate decision as long as possible. His inclinations will certainly lead him to refuse. Should circumstances overcome his inclinations, I know it will occasion more distress to him, than any other event of his life. Mr. John Adams, Mr. Hancock, & Gen. Knox are spoken of as Candidates for the Vice-Presidency. It is rather probable that the first will be appointed, than either of the others. Very much will depend upon having men in the higher offices, in whom the Public can naturally place the greatest confidence. Upon the whole we may augur much more favourable things, than appearance heretofore promised.

The habits of industry and economy, which have been introduced by necessity, require only an efficient general government to ensure prosperity and the people of the different States seem disposed to acquiesce in such a government provided care be taken not to touch their purses too deeply.

The Count du Moustier, his sister, her son, and Mr. Du Pont, have lately been at Mount Vernon.

The Minister appears to be a very well informed man and extremely desirous of promoting the commercial connection between France and this country. The little misunderstandings that existed shortly after his arrival have been explained away. He affects plainness in dress & simplicity of manners, but perhaps, not so much to fall into American customs as the Chr Luzerne did. It is questionable, therefore, whether he will be so popular. Mlle de Brehan appears very inquisitive after information. She does not find the country answer M. Crevecoeur's description of it. Some Ladies have thought she rather undervalued them, when she appeared in a considerable company, with a three-cornered muslin Handkerchief tyed round her head, nearly in the fashion of the Negro Women in the West Indies.

On general topics I will only observe that the country has recovered greatly from the devastations which had been impressed on it by the war. Emigrations from the old settlements to the west continue to be immense. The establishment at Washington from its systematical organization as

well as from the character of its inhabitants, promises to become numerous & flourishing in a short period. In the mean while, the arts of peace are progressing in the old State, perhaps more rapidly than they have ever before done. The opening of the Potomac (whose several falls I have lately visited) goes on well & will be accomplished. The works on the James River & the Susquehannah, I believe, are carried forward more slowly.

Mayo's bridge has been completed & by a great storm within a few weeks afterwards, was carried away. It was so productive while in use that he received an offer for his property in it, from a company, of 1000 in hand, of having it kept in repair & having half the annual income of the Toll, for ever. The spirit of improvement is gaining grounds.

The three great bridges lately erected in Massachusetts do that State vast credit. The enterprise in trade & manufacture supported by domestic economy, has, during the last year for the first time made the exports from thence considerably more valuable than the imports into it. To this the trade to the east Indies has not a little contributed. Though the means of public travelling are passably good; I cannot yet commend the American roads. In this neighbourhood, viz; at the town of Alexandria, the first turnpikes in America have been established. They have answered good purposes, so far as may be judged from a partial experiment; and either a similar or some other effectual mode ought to be adopted throughout the Continent.

As much attention is paid to the cultivation of literature as can be expected in a country that is so young & whose inhabitants are obliged to apply themselves to some profession for a maintenance.

Dr. Ramsey is about to extend his History to the whole Revolution.

A Mr. O'Connor, from Ireland is going through the States to obtain subscriptions for a work of a similar kind which he asserts, he is on the point of publishing. I have not learned that any copies of Dr. Gordon's have reached America; though he wrote to Gen. Washington sometime ago that the

2nd volume was in the press; Mr. Warville, I conclude, is collecting material for some works relative to America, he was here a few days ago. I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Mazzei's Researches, but have heard a good account of their Merits. To him, to Mr. Short and all my particular acquaintances I wish to be remembered with cordiality.

I beg my compliments may be given to Miss Jefferson, and that you will ever believe me, with sincerest gratitude and unalterable friendship,

Dear Sir,

Your much obliged and very humble Servant,

D. HUMPHREYS.

His Excy.
THOMAS JEFFERSON ESQ:
&c, &c, &c.[1]

Various causes delayed the organization of the first Congress under the Constitution. The people were practically without any government from March 4, 1789, when the Constitution went into effect, until the first week in April when the Senate and House of Representatives had a quorum for business, the votes for President and Vice-President could be canvassed and formal announcement made of the result.

George Washington had been unanimously elected President, and John Adams of Massachusetts Vice-President, by a large majority.

A certified copy of this result was sent to Gen. Washington by a special messenger, Mr. Charles Thompson, the competent and faithful Secretary of the former Congress. He arrived at Mount Vernon on April 14, 1789.

Washington received the news with outward calm but inward perturbation, for he had said in a recent letter to Gen. Knox: "My movements to the chair of govern-

[1] U. S. Archives, State Dept., Washington, D. C.

ment will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit, who is going to the place of his execution."[1]

When the summons came he was ready to obey it promptly for he recognized it as the call of duty.

Col. Williams, who was the chairman of the committee of the citizens of Baltimore to extend a welcome to Gen. Washington on his passage through the city, was anxious to be assured of the General's feelings in the matter of a presentation of an address from the citizens of Baltimore, and was naturally desirous of not making any arrangements for public functions which might not be thoroughly agreeable to Gen. Washington, and he therefore wrote a letter to Col. Humphreys on the subject on April 5, 1789, knowing that no one was better able to give him the desired information than the General's most intimate friend and companion. Col. Humphreys immediately sent the following reply:

MOUNT VERNON,
April 7, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

On the subject of your letter of the 5th (which needed no apology) I can only give you the general information which I have in my power to do from a knowledge of the sentiments of the person alluded to, as drawn from him on some indispensably necessary occasions. The time has been so long delayed beyond the period in which the two houses of Congress were to have assembled, and the public impatience for the organization of the Government appears to be so great that the Person in question will not think it advisable to subject himself to the contingencies of a water passage by crossing the Bay, nor consider himself at liberty to make any delay (beside what may be necessary for refreshing his horses) on the route. He will go by the common Post Road and probably remain the night at Baltimore. The more quietly he may be permitted

[1] Marshall's *Washington*, v., p. 152. Irving's *Washington*, iv., p. 466.

to make his journey the more agreeable will it be to him. But it is not necessary I should explain his feelings to you who are so well acquainted with him yourself. However, he would not, I imagine take any measure which might prevent the respectable Citizens from gratifying their reasonable inclinations: His neighbours, the people of Alexandria, after deliberating a long time in what manner they could testify their affection to him in the more acceptable manner have prepared a short and really affectionate address; which I have seen and which I conceive he cannot (with a good grace) refuse to receive. I hardly know whether I am justifiable in mentioning these last circumstances; but I am willing to give you all the light and offer you all the services which may be in my power, being with sentiments of real esteem and the highest consideration,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient & very humble Servt,

D. Humphreys.

Genl. Williams.[1]

On April 16 Washington made this entry in his Diary:

About ten o'clock, I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity; and with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York in company with Mr. Thompson and Colonel Humphries, with the best dispositions to render service to my country, in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations.[2]

The whole journey was one continual triumphal march. His old friends and associates entertained him on that day at dinner in Alexandria, and presented an address in which affection for their neighbour and love of country are equally shown.

[1] Dreer Collection, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pa.

[2] Marshall's *Washington*, v., p. 154.

Washington thanked them in a short speech which he could hardly read for emotion, and spoke of the reluctance with which he again entered upon "the tempestuous and uncertain ocean of public life."

He was accompanied to Georgetown by a cavalcade of gentlemen, where he was met by a company of Maryland gentlemen, who formally welcomed him to their State.

Everywhere he was greeted with music, song, speech, and banquet; he was hailed as the chief who should overcome civil disorder as he had overcome hostile forces. Trenton with its triumphal arch, its chorus of thirteen young girls who sang an original ode; New Brunswick where the Governor of New Jersey met him, and Elizabethtown Point where he was to embark for New York, showed by demonstrations of joy the love they felt for the chosen head of the nation.

A handsomely decorated barge, rowed by thirteen selected members of the New York Pilots' Association in white uniforms, was in waiting. As he entered it, martial music filled the air, and salutes were fired from various batteries. He was accompanied to the city by Mr. Thompson and Col. Humphreys, and a committee from each House of Congress. All this display and spontaneous expression of the people's joy touched Washington deeply. He landed at Murray's wharf, gaily and tastefully adorned with flags and bunting, and thronged with people. He was formally received by the Governor of New York, who was accompanied by the representatives of foreign nations, a large military escort and many distinguished citizens.

Declining to ride in the carriage which had been provided he was escorted by a special guard and the whole company to the house prepared for his reception on the corner of Pearl and Cherry streets, the former home of Walter Franklin, and considered one of the handsomest in the city.

In his Diary, Washington writes of this entry into the city on April 23:

> The display of boats which attended and joined on this occasion, some with vocal, and others with instrumental music on board, the decorations of the ships, the roar of cannon, and the loud acclamation of the people, which rent the sky as I passed along the wharfs, filled my mind with sensations as painful (contemplating the reverse of this scene, which may be the case after all my labours to do good) as they were pleasing.[1]

Col. Humphreys who knew the wishes and desires of his General was of great service in putting the house in order and in making the final preparations for the inauguration which was arranged to take place on Thursday, April 30. Upon that day which had long been looked forward to with eager expectation the whole city was astir at an early hour. The roll of drums and the music of martial bands was heard, members of military companies were hurrying to take their places, from all the surrounding towns hundreds came on horseback, by coach, by carriage, by boat and on foot, to view the imposing ceremony.

At nine o'clock the church bells with jubilant peals summoned all to enter and join in the services in which prayers for the prosperity of the new government and the first President were offered.

At noon the city troops formed in front of the President's house. They were followed by the committees appointed by the Senate and House of Representatives and the heads of departments under the Confederation.

The procession was then formed with the troops as an escort, followed by the committees and department

[1] Marshall's *Washington*, v., p. 160.

chiefs. Washington entered a coach of state drawn by white horses and surrounded by a special escort. Col. Humphreys and Mr. Lear followed in the General's own carriage; after them came the foreign ministers and a long train of citizens. By the most direct route the long line went to the Federal Hall on the corner of Wall and Nassau streets, a building which had originally served for Colonial assemblies but had been remodelled and enlarged for the use of the Federal government by the city and state of New York.

Through the shouting multitudes the brilliant array advanced. Two hundred yards from the hall a halt was made, Washington and his suite left their carriages and passed through the lines of troops into the hall and entered the Senate Chamber, where he was formally welcomed by the Vice-President and the Senators, who rose to receive him.

He was then conducted by the Vice-President to a chair of state at the upper end of the room. His suite stood near him. A silence fell upon the assembly broken by the voice of the Vice-President saying that all things were now ready for the President-elect to take the oath of office.

In a calm but low voice Washington said: "I am ready."

Robert B. Livingston, Chancellor of the State of New York, and other state and national officials, the members of the Senate and the House went to the balcony overlooking Wall Street. It is described as "a kind of open screen with lofty columns supporting the roof."

Upon a table covered with crimson cloth, near the centre, was an elegantly bound copy of the Holy Bible, with silver clasps and corners. It had been loaned for the occasion by St. John's Masonic Lodge. An armchair was placed by the table. As the President-elect stepped out

upon the balcony the shouts of the multitudes that filled the whole space in front of the hall overcame Washington, who advanced to the front of the balcony, laid his hand upon his heart, bowed several times, and then sat down in the chair.

Deep stillness succeeded. Washington arose; near him stood John Adams, on his right; the Chancellor on his left, slightly in the rear Col. Hamilton, Roger Sherman, General Knox, General St. Clair, Baron Steuben, Col. Humphreys, Mr. Lear, and others.

With great dignity the Chancellor approached Washington. Mr. Otis held up the Bible on its crimson cushion. The oath was read, solemnly and slowly repeated by Washington, who reverently bent to kiss the Book, and the Chancellor in a clear, penetrating voice said from the front of the balcony, "Long live George Washington, President of the United States." At that moment a flag was unfurled from the cupola of the Hall, the artillery boomed forth salutes on the Battery, all the bells in the city rang, and a heartfelt shout went up once more from the people, as the President, with the distinguished company on the balcony, returned to the Senate Chamber. In a low but clear voice the President then delivered a brief inaugural address.

Once more the procession re-formed, and passing through the people who lined Broadway, went to St. Paul's Chapel where a special service was held. This service was arranged by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Provoost, Bishop of New York and Rector of Trinity Church. He was also a chaplain of Congress, and officiated on this historic occasion.

The President and the whole company which filled the Chapel joined in it with thankful devotion.

Several public and private dinners with illuminations and fireworks in the evening closed this auspicious day.

Washington applied himself with great diligence to his

new duties and chose his official advisers with excellent judgment. Thomas Jefferson he named for the Department of Foreign Affairs; Alexander Hamilton for the Treasury; Henry Knox for the War Department; and Edmund Randolph for Attorney General. They were all men eminent and fit. Much debate had been held in Congress over the official designation of the President. A committee of the Senate on May 14, 1789, reported in favour of "His Highness, the President of the United States of America and Protector of their Liberties." Before his inauguration he had been frequently spoken of as "His Highness" and "His Excellency." Finally the opinion of the chairman of the conference committee from the House, Mr. Benson, prevailed and it was determined to use only the style or title in the Constitution.

Another source of some perplexity was the social state to be observed by the President. Was he to see all persons who came, or was he only to have interviews with those who came by appointment? Was he to return all visits or only those of persons in official life? There were some who thought that the representative of a free and equal people should be accessible at all times to everyone. They would have him live in the greatest plainness and simplicity. The experience of a few days of office and the constant interruptions to the necessary business of the station impelled him to seek advice from several judicious friends as to the proper etiquette of the President's office. Hamilton thought "care should be taken to avoid so high a tone in the demeanour of the occupant as to shock the prevalent notions of equality." He proposed one levee a week at a fixed time, the President to attend for half an hour and then retire.

He should not accept invitations, but give formal entertainments two or four times a year, the suggested days being those of Independence, Inauguration, French

Alliance and Treaty of Peace, 1783. On levee days the President should entertain at a family dinner six or eight persons in official life.

The heads of departments to have access to him at all times—certain foreign ministers and the members of the Senate should also have this privilege.

The Vice-President thought that a large degree of splendour and reserve should surround the head of the nation to enable the United States to obtain the respect of foreign nations. He suggested aides-de-camp, masters of ceremony, and chamberlains. He thought two days necessary in the week to be set apart for receiving visits of ceremony and compliment. Interviews should be arranged through the minister of state. The hours for these interviews should be limited to a certain time in the morning. The President should be at liberty to invite such persons in public life to call upon him in small companies as he might desire. His private life he should arrange as he thought best.

Washington listened to his friends, noted their answers, and then proceeded to arrange his official life as he thought best, acting upon the substance of their advice which agreed with his own ideas.

He determined to return no calls and receive official visits at appointed hours. His dinner parties were to be small and include both officials and noted strangers.

After he had established his rules for his daily public life he arranged a series of weekly receptions or "levees" every Tuesday, from three to four in the afternoon.

Mrs. Washington held a weekly reception every Friday from eight to ten.

Tradition and gossip ascribe to Gen. Knox and Col. Humphreys the details of the ceremony observed at these public functions.

Mr. Jefferson in his *Ana* relates a rather stupid

anecdote in regard to Washington's first levee. It has little wit or point, but here it is. Col. Humphreys he states acted as master of ceremonies and admitted all visitors to an outer room or antechamber. When all were assembled he threw open the door of the inner large room in which was the President, and preceding them announced with a loud voice, "The President of the United States." The sequel to his story is that Washington was perplexed, annoyed, and angry and showed his annoyance during the reception. When the guests had gone he said to the Colonel, "Well, you have taken me in once, and by ——you shall never take me in a second time."

What proves that this anecdote is either apocryphal or exaggerated is that what is said of both parties to it is at variance with their character. Humphreys had too much good breeding and too much experience of good society to commit a breach of manners or social etiquette. Moreover he would never have done anything of this nature without consulting his friend and chief. The story possibly originated from a disappointed seeker for the President's favour, as during the early months of the President's incumbency the Colonel acted as his confidential secretary. Or else the story was manufactured out of whole cloth by Jefferson for his own ends. As we all know Washington was aristocratic; Jefferson, demagogic; and the latter, in order to curry favour with the unthinking masses, aped some of the leaders of the French Revolution in their affectation of simplicity and disregard of the courtesies of gentle life. This affectation and playing to the groundlings in the pit is accountable for most of his ill-natured and sarcastic remarks in his *Ana*.[1]

Col. Humphreys continued to act as private secretary to Gen. Washington as he had always done in the past. No matter how long his absences might be, it is evident

[1] For a version of this story see Irving's *Washington*, v., pp. 13, 14.

that just as soon as he returned within "the family of General Washington" he seemed to have assumed that honoured position. The following letter written at this period is interesting on account of its historical association.

New York, May 8th, 1789.

Sir,

I am commanded by the President of the United States to inform you that he has this day received the Answer of the House of Representatives to his speech; and that it will be convenient for him to receive the Address of the Mayor, Aldermen and commonalty of New York, to-morrow at 12 o'clock, or any other day at the same hour, provided the time shall be notified to him in season for making his arrangements accordingly.

I am, with great esteem, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

D. Humphreys.

Richard Varick, Esqr.,
Recorder of the City of New York.[1]

[1] Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pa.